

CURRENT THEOLOGY

SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this review, offered in several parts,* is to give an overview of studies in Roman Catholic sacramental theology, with enough bibliographical references to facilitate further inquiry in the major Western languages.¹ Because of the extensive literature in the field, though contributions on the theology of individual sacraments are many and important, it was decided to focus on methods employed in doing sacramental theology and on general theory. Furthermore, given the enormous number of titles, the years 1980 and 1993 have been taken to set the terms of reference.² The survey covers mainly European, North American, and Latin American contributions, with some reference to works from Africa and Asia.

* The sections dealing with Postmodern Approaches, Feminist Theology, African and Asian Contributions (Sections 3 through 5), and the Conclusion were written by David N. Power, O.M.I. Section 1, The Post-Rahnerian Formulation, is by Regis A. Duffy, O.F.M., and Section 2, on Liberation Theology, is by Kevin W. Irwin. All three authors contributed to the Introduction.

¹ Though the interchange among Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant theologies is important, the field is so large that it was decided to concentrate here on specifically Roman Catholic contributions, even while recognizing that these have been enriched by contact with other traditions, Christian and Jewish.

² A number of review articles have appeared during that period in different languages. In alphabetical order, these are: Dionisio Borobio, "Cristología y sacramentología," *Sal-manticensis* 31 (1984) 5-47; Henri Bourgeois, "Bulletin de Théologie Sacramentaire," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 72 (1984) 291-318; 75 (1987) 379-414; 78 (1990) 591-624; 82 (1994) 103-31; Kevin W. Irwin, "Recent Sacramental Theology: A Review Discussion," *The Thomist* 47 (1983) 592-603; 52 (1988) 124-47; 53 (1989) 281-313; Lothar Lies, "Trinitätsvergessenheit gegenwärtiger Sakramententheologie?" *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 105 (1983) 290-314; Luis Maldonado Arenas, "Los movimientos de la sacramentología," *Revista Española de Teología* 51 (1991) 43-55; Joseph Martos, "Sacraments in the 1980s: A Review of Books in Print," *Diakonia* 22 (1991) 130-42; Domenico Sartore, "Alcuni recenti trattati di sacramentaria fondamentale: Considerazioni di un liturgista," *Rivista Liturgica* 75 (1988) 321-39; Arno Schilson, "Erneuerung des Sakramententheologie im 20. Jahrhundert," *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 37 (1987) 18-41; idem, "Symbolwirklichkeit und Sakrament: Ein Literaturbericht," *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 40 (1990) 26-52; Arno Schilson/Dario Zadra, "Symbol und Sakrament," in *Christlicher Glaube in Moderner Gesellschaft*, vol. 28 of *Enzyklopädische Bibliothek* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder 1982) 86-150; A. Schmied, "Perspektiven und Akzente heutiger Sakramententheologie," *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 44 (1981) 17-45; A. M. Triacca, "Per una trattazione dei sacramenti in prospettiva liturgica: Approccio ad un sondaggio di opinione," *Rivista Liturgica* 75 (1988) 340-58.

Disciplinary Complexity

The complexity of current sacramental theology may be seen from a brief inspection of the new bibliography published at the Gregorian University Press by Maksimilijan Žitnik³ for the period between 1960 and 1988. A look at the indices in the fourth volume shows how intricate the discipline has become and how much it draws on other fields of research. Under "Sacraments in General," beside traditional issues such as matter and form, institution and causality, one finds such items as rite and ritual, festival, symbol, iconography, anthropological dimension, and sociology. In the general index of entries there are headings on women, feminism, family, and popular religion, as well as on liturgy and each of the seven sacraments of Catholic tradition.

Such a bibliography is witness to the fact that there is no easy distinction between liturgy and sacrament. To take but one example, one cannot study the sacraments of initiation without reference to the liturgical year and to the rites of the catechumenate. Thus manuals such as *L'Eglise en Prière*,⁴ *Gottesdienst der Kirche*,⁵ *Anamnesis*,⁶ *La celebración en la Iglesia*,⁷ by including individual sacraments under the general heading of "Liturgy" place them in what is their proper context, not only for purposes of history but also for theological reflection. Furthermore, along with historical, liturgical, and theological considerations, this permits the study of sacraments as rituals, in which there is a considerable interaction of corporal, visual and verbal expressions, all having a relation to cultural experience and tradition.

An interesting study along these lines is provided by the Institute of Pastoral Liturgy in Padua, Italy which has published three series of books reflecting an interdisciplinary, *praxis* approach to liturgy and sacraments. The first series includes explorations of the experience of God in worship and liturgy as an act of communication,⁸ studies of how

³ Maksimilijan Žitnik, *Sacramenta, Bibliographia Internationalis*, 4 vols. (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1992).

⁴ *L'Eglise en Prière*; ET: *The Church at Prayer: An Introduction to the Liturgy*, ed. Aimé Georges Martimort, introd. Gerard S. Sloyan, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, 4 vols. in 1 (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992).

⁵ *Gottesdienst der Kirche: Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft*, ed. Bernard Meyer et al. (Regensburg: Pustet, 1983-).

⁶ *Anamnesis: Introduzione storico-teologica alla liturgia*, ed. Salvatore Marsili (Turin: Marietti, 1983-).

⁷ J. M. Canals et al., *La celebración en la iglesia*, dir. Dionisio Borobio (Salamanca: Sigueme, 1985; 2d ed. 1988).

⁸ All books are published under the auspices of the Abbey of Santa Giustina under the general title of *Caro Salutis Cardo* and are published by Edizioni Messagero Padova.

the proclaimed Word is interpreted in the act of liturgy,⁹ and studies of specific topics such as Eucharist and ecumenism, the theology of confirmation, and the role of the ordained minister in liturgy.¹⁰

The second, most comprehensive series includes two volumes by Pelagio Visentin entitled *Culmen et Fons* comprising a veritable encyclopedia of liturgical study. The first volume describes in detail how the paschal mystery of Christ is celebrated in the Church through the sacraments, the liturgical year, and the hours. Methodologically, the liturgy itself serves as the fundamental theological source for this exposition.¹¹ This guides the work of the second volume concerning the process and progress of the reform of the liturgy (especially in Italy) and how the liturgy enlivens the inner dynamic of the Christian life.¹² A complement to this *magnum opus* describes the *praxis* method of the Santa Giustina Institute. It contains essays by distinguished Italian liturgical scholars such as Salvatore Marsili, Luigi Sartori, Franco Brovelli, and Domenico Sartore.¹³ These authors deal with the relationship between liturgy and contemporary theological discourse, pastoral theology,¹⁴ the interdisciplinary approach to the study of liturgical celebration, and the relation of liturgy to catechesis. Other titles in this series include a rather complete assessment of the liturgical reform and the theology of ordained ministry.¹⁵

Of the two titles in the third series of Santa Giustina publications, the first, by Giorgio Bonaccorso, is a most helpful, synthetic mono-

This first series is entitled "Contributi" and includes *Liturgia, soglia dell'esperienza di Dio?* ed. A. N. Terrin (1982), *Comunicazione e ritualità: La celebrazione liturgica alla verifica delle leggi della comunicazione*, ed. L. Sartori (1988).

⁹ *Dall'esegesi all'ermeneutica attraverso la celebrazione*, ed. R. Cecolin (1991), and two in preparation: *La parola ispirata genera l'eucologia: L'eucologia rigenera la parola*, and *La parola nella dinamica celebrativa*.

¹⁰ *Eucaristia sfida alle Chiese divise*, ed. L. Sartori (1984), *Celebrare confermazione: Rassegna critica dell'attuale dibattito teologico sul sacramento*, ed. A. Cechinato (1987), and *Sacerdozio e mediazioni: Le varie forme di mediazioni nell'esperienza della Chiesa e il ministero ordinato*, ed. R. Cecolin (1991).

¹¹ *Culmen et Fons: Raccolta di studi di liturgia e spiritualità*, ed. R. Cecolin and F. Trolese, vol. 1 (1987); the subtitle is *Mysterium Christi ab Ecclesia Celebratum*.

¹² Also published in 1987, this second volume is subtitled (*Lex orandi*) e (*Lex credendi*).

¹³ *Una liturgia per l'uomo: La liturgia pastorale e i suoi compiti*, ed. P. Visentin, A. N. Terrin and R. Cecolin (1986).

¹⁴ The term "pastoral" here means reflection on the activity and life of the Church; it is not to be confused with that which is "practical," meaning what is immediately applicable for use in liturgy.

¹⁵ *La riforma liturgica in Italia: Realtà e speranze*, ed. P. Visentin (1984); *Infondi lo Spirito degli Apostoli: Teologia liturgico-ecumenica del ministero ordinato*, ed. E. Lodi (1987).

graph on method in liturgical study.¹⁶ The contemporary postconciliar era sets the framework for this study of the theological foundations and elements of the liturgical reform, the value of contemporary historical, theological, and pastoral studies of the liturgy, and the way epistemology and semiotics relate to liturgical study today. Throughout, actual liturgical celebration and the present state of the liturgical reform ground Bonaccorso's theological reflections. While very modest in size and scope, this volume could be considered a *primer* to the work and method of the Padua Institute and a valuable tool for those seeking for ways to study sacraments from liturgical, theological, and phenomenological perspectives.

Though it is not presented as a formal sacramental theology, Kevin Irwin's book *Context and Text*¹⁷ presents a methodological approach to the study of sacramental and liturgical texts which is important to sacramental theology. It is not enough to write about sacraments and about what they do. One has to be able to analyze and understand them and their efficacy from within their own expression and framework. Irwin's book is divided into three parts, under the headings: Relating liturgy and theology; Context is text: theology of liturgy; and Text shapes context: liturgical theology. It is the second part that is most pertinent to sacramental theology, for in it he "proposes a method for articulating a theology of the act of liturgy dealing with Word, symbol, euchology and the liturgical arts."¹⁸ By examining these elements in concrete and specific examples, Irwin shows how the liturgical act itself generates an understanding of sacrament and of participation in it. As he himself comments, studies of the imagination and of liturgical performance could add to this comprehension of sacrament from within the act itself.

Methodological Approaches

Given this apprehension of sacramental complexity, in current sacramental theology the influence of language studies,¹⁹ ritual studies,²⁰

¹⁶ *Introduzione allo studio della Liturgia* (1990).

¹⁷ Kevin W. Irwin, *Context and Text: Method in Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville: Pueblo/Liturgical, 1994).

¹⁸ *Ibid.* xi.

¹⁹ One thinks of such names as J. L. Austin, Paul Ricoeur, Emile Benveniste, and Jacques Derrida, quite often cited in sacramental theology.

²⁰ For a survey of studies in English on ritual, its function, and its roots, see *Liturgy Digest* 1/1 (Spring 1993), a publication of the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy, edited by Nathan Mitchell. For a broader survey, with bibliographical references, see the double issue *Enjeux du Rite dans la Modernité*, of *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 78/3 (1990) 322–447, and 78/4 (1990) 481–589, edited by J. Moingt. Note especially the

and hermeneutical theory is evident. These studies are, however, woven into sacramental theology in a variety of ways. This can be explained only by noting the diversity of methodological approaches.

Overviews

In the realm of sacramental theology, there are some works that are overviews, useful in informing readers about ideas, concerns, and interests that have become common in this literature over a period of time. Thus Carlo Rocchetta²¹ opens his book with a look at the anthropological foundation of sacrament, with reference to literature on symbol and on rite, and relates these concepts to humanity's relation to creation and to history.

In a section entitled "Anamnesis of the Faith of the Church," he goes back to the biblical and patristic roots of sacramental theology with much attention to the notion of *mystery*. Here the influence of Odo Casel is apparent.²² Rocchetta then gives an overview of the history of sacramental theology, with a look at the patristic period, a section on the pertinence of scholastic theology, a presentation of manual theology, and finally a look at contemporary issues and trends. In the last part of the book, he attempts a systematic theology centered around the notions of mystery and celebration.

In the conclusion to his 1990 survey of the relation between the study of symbol and sacramental theology, Arno Schilson²³ remarks that much sacramental theology has retrieved the importance of rooting its thought in actual celebration rather than in abstract concepts.

article by Jean-Yves Hameline, "Éléments d'anthropologie, de sociologie et de musicologie du culte chrétien" 397-424.

²¹ Carlo Rocchetta, *Sacramentaria fondamentale: Dal "mysterion" al "sacramentum,"* Corso di teologia sistematica 8 (Bologna: Dehoniane, 1989). Designed for seminarians, the work serves to keep them abreast of studies and developments. It is a kind of new breed of manual theology, which is helpful, since it surveys the field, takes in the history of sacrament and sacramental theology, shows the main points of interest in current systematic and pastoral theology, and does not try to subject all opinions to a narrow critique. Another way to deal with complexity is to practically eliminate general sacramental theology in favor of the study of each sacrament in particular, looked at from an ecclesial and not merely personal perspective. This is the option taken in the collective work, *Initiation à la pratique de la théologie*, vol. 3 (Paris: Cerf, 1983) which has only twenty pages on general sacramental principles, with twenty-eight devoted to a treatment of baptism as incorporation into Christ and the Church, and twenty-six to a treatment of the Eucharist as sacrament of ecclesial communion.

²² The fullest and most important study of Casel, which places his work in relation to later developments in sacramental theology, is that of Arno Schilson, *Theologie als Sakramententheologie: Die Mysterienlehre Odo Casels* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1992).

²³ See above, note 1.

As he has done elsewhere, he indicates the influence of Odo Casel and Romano Guardini on this trend, and hence the importance of *mystery* to a theology of celebration. He further notes the necessity of a history of sacramental theology, which incorporates accurate and historically-minded studies of such things as scholastic theology and church councils, since this is the only serious way to keep in touch with tradition. He further notes how much has to be done in attaining a proper understanding of symbol and its anthropological foundations, of the nature of symbolic communication, and of the methods for the interpretation of symbols. In all of this, he sees the importance of relating symbol and rite to social reality, something that he believes has been helped especially by Latin American theology and by the critical-praxis outlook of some German scholars.

As these overviews show, studies on ritual, language, feast, symbol, and the like are the commonplaces of most of current sacramental theology. At the same time, the understanding of the place of sacrament in the Church and in the economy of grace is quite divergent. The differences are in large part understandable in light of different fundamental approaches or theological methods that dictate the way in which the ritual and the symbolic is integrated into theology.

Major Influences

Because from the point of view of object, the study turns out to be so broad and so complex, to give some general sense of what is going on in sacramental theology it seems most helpful to decipher the fundamental methodological approaches taken in the study of the field. Before distinguishing current approaches, however, it is necessary to point to abiding influences from works prior to the decade under survey.

Turn to mystery is a common background. This can be found in a Caselian retrieval of the nature of the liturgy as mystery, or in Henri de Lubac's contrast between the symbolic approach of the Church Fathers and the concern with rational explanation, in keeping with philosophical demands, of scholastic theology.²⁴ In both cases, liturgy is viewed as an act of the Church which offers participation in Christ's mystery, and the nature of the Church is considered as a communion whose symbolic expression is found in sacrament.

Besides the influence of this approach to liturgy and sacrament as celebration of mystery, two other strong influences have to be noted as background to the development of sacramental theology since 1980.

²⁴ Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: L'Eucharistie et l'Eglise au Moyen Age* (Paris: Aubier, 1949).

The first is the theology of Karl Rahner, with his notion of *Realsymbol* and his anthropological starting point.²⁵ As a comprehensive notion and method for all theology, this clearly had special relevance to sacrament. Rahner grounds his concept of symbol in its capacity to realize what is essential in a being. Without symbolic acts and their revelatory character, human persons would not be able to actualize their human nature. In the very act of transcending their limits, human beings are engaged in an existence shaped by symbolic activity. In turn, the human encounter with God is premised on the symbolic possibilities of created reality. The Church, recalling Christ's humanity as the perfect symbol of God's redemptive love and action, continues this symbolic presence especially in its sacramental praxis. It is the Church as the visible manifestation of grace which provides the understanding of the sacramental sign as a cause of grace, since grace is given by being signified.

The second influence is that of Hans Urs von Balthasar and his aesthetic theology, with the complementary positions of Henri de Lubac and Louis Bouyer.²⁶ Though this method has not been applied to sacramental theology as often or as comprehensively as the method of Karl Rahner, it clearly has application there. In von Balthasar, sacraments are treated most fully in the first volume of *Herrlichkeit*.²⁷ There are also some pertinent pages in *Theodramatik*,²⁸ to say nothing of articles scattered throughout his writings.²⁹

Two aspects in particular of his understanding of sacrament continue to exercise an influence. First, in keeping with the soteriology which focuses on the cross of Christ as the manifestation of divine love in its very concealment of the Godhead and on the kenosis of Christ's descent into hell, Balthasar explains the sacraments as the Church's communion with Christ in this mystery. Second, in explaining the mystery of the Church he exploits especially the bride/bridegroom imagery of salvation through Christ. Thus he finds the Church's form in the complementarity of Mary's spirituality to the pastoral office, ex-

²⁵ Karl Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol," in *Theological Investigations* 4, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon, 1966) 221–52.

²⁶ Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer*, trans. Charles Underhill Quinn (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1968).

²⁷ In English translation, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics 1: Seeing the Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius, reprinted 1989) 556–82. The original German is from 1961.

²⁸ *Theodramatik* II/2: *Die Personen in Christus* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1978) 311–30, 388–410.

²⁹ For an overview, see the article by M. Miller, "The Sacramental Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar," *Worship* 64 (1990) 48–66.

pressed especially in the office of Peter. All Christians are called to model their lives on that of Mary in her relation to Christ, and through him to the Father and the Spirit. On the other hand, the continued presence of Christ the bridegroom in the Church is represented by ordained ministers, who act *in persona Christi*, in their teaching, sacramental, and pastoral charge.

The starting point is the exact opposite of the anthropological. The role of the aesthetic in revelation and the Word's disclosure of the inner life and love of the Trinity are fundamental to a discussion of sacrament. The form or Gestalt of revelation is determined by the coming forth from the Trinity of the Word as manifestation of God's agape or love, that embraces humanity and the world. It is in the wholeness of the revelation that any of its parts is understood.³⁰ The sacraments are placed against the background of the reality of the Word Incarnate, in the mystery of his Incarnation, kenosis or self-emptying, and glorification. In this schema, the centrality of the Eucharist emerges very clearly, as well as the categories of presence, sacrifice, self-abandonment, and ecclesiality in explaining it. The Eucharist belongs within the mystery of the cross. It was at the Last Supper that Jesus completed his kenotic condition, in anticipation of his descent into hell, by giving himself in symbolic embodiment as bread to be chewed and wine poured out. This is ever available to the Church, where Christ is present in love and self-giving, and the Church is taken into his sacrifice, sealed in the reception of the bread and wine. Complementary to this way of explaining the Eucharist, von Balthasar sees the Sacrament of penance as the model for an understanding of all the sacraments, inasmuch as it is an exemplary instance of the encounter in Christ between the sinner and the forgiving God.³¹

Current Approaches

Against the background of these influences which have acquired an almost classical status, five different approaches in recent writings are

³⁰ Balthasar himself summarizes his aesthetics in this way: "Our *Aesthetics* was concerned with God's epiphany—characterized as the manifestation of his *kabod* (glory)—amid the innumerable other appearances in nature and history, and it also had to discuss the conditions which are required for this glory to be perceived. But insofar as everything was included under the idea of "glory," the formal standpoint remained *purely theocentric*, even where . . . God's glory was manifested as a covenant with *man*, ultimately resulting in the interior response of redeemed man "to the praise of the glory of his grace (Eph 1:6)" (*Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory 2: Dramatis Personae: Man in God* [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990] 21. The original German is from 1976).

³¹ *Seeing the Form* 580–81.

distinguished in this survey, allowing for variations within each category:³² (1) development of the turn to the subject, as it was adopted by leading Catholic theologians, which embraces interdisciplinary methods; (2) liberation theologies, with their particular concern for praxis; (3) theologies which integrate the postmodernist critique of the Western metaphysical tradition and its influence on theology, allowing, however, for considerable diversity in the positions which emerge from this; (4) feminist critique and retrieval of sacramental celebration; (5) theologies coming from Africa and Asia relating sacraments simultaneously to culture and to liberation.

1. THE POST-RAHNERIAN FORMULATION

In presenting this approach to sacramental theology, it is helpful to distinguish between works that belong more clearly in systematics and those which make broader use of interdisciplinary methods.

Systematic Theologies

To weigh the pervasive influence of Rahner's formulation of *Realsymbol* and symbolic causality, one has only to review the trinitarian grounding of sacrament in the work of Theodor Schneider, Lothar Lies, and Edward Kilmartin. Schneider begins, in Rahnerian fashion, with the historical and embodied person who is confronted with revelation's offer of salvation and its corollary, encounter with the living God as revealed in Christ.¹ It is this Christological rather than trinitarian frame of reference which provides Schneider with a basis for his discussion of the epicletic and ecclesial dimensions of sacrament and its historical sevenfold expression. This may be explained by Schneider's main concern, which, in contrast to Lies and Kilmartin, is a theological discussion of each sacrament rather than a larger theoretical discussion of sacraments in general. In any case, *Realsymbol* forms the background for his treatment of the sacramental encounter with God in Christ.

Lies also begins with the human existential situation as an encounter that entails a transcendental and freely willed openness to love. In this encounter, the Trinity is "person in person while we have defined the human being as embodied person."² The Incarnation has further specified the nature of sacramental encounter and deepened our un-

³² There is of course overlapping, and there is no intention in what follows to reduce theologies to watertight categorizations.

¹ Theodor Schneider, *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes: Grundriss der Sakramententheologie* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1987).

² Lothar Lies, *Sakramententheologie: Eine personale Sicht* (Graz: Styria, 1990) 57.

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derstanding of created reality. Lies cites the Council of Florence's affirmation that the Trinity is the creator of this reality, both spiritual and corporal, in order to insist that this same reality bears the traces of its trinitarian origins.³

Lies then reexamines anamnesis, epiclesis, and koinonia from the existential situation of the human being encountering the Trinity in freedom and love. Just as the human person knows herself in relation to others, so this is a model for encountering the Trinity. Taking his lead from Augustine, Lies then reinterprets the meaning of human life from its radical and primary source, the life of the Trinity. Human symbols that reveal the meaning of life are ultimately tied to the life of the Trinity. The trinitarian characteristic of total union and distinct persons, understood in terms of freedom to love, revalues human relations and their anthropological symbols. Thus, the forgiveness symbolized in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation cannot be fully appreciated apart from the shared and loving freedom of the Trinity. Finally, the trinitarian community provides both the criterion and assurance for the possibility of union with others that will not destroy what is unique to each person. In effect, Lies works out many of the trinitarian and symbolic implications of Rahner's thought so as to shed new light on sacramental symbols and their anthropological connections.

Kilmartin is perhaps the most thorough in his discussion of how the triune God's self-communication to humanity grounds liturgical expression. He sees the effort to demonstrate how a theology of liturgy might be articulated as a theology of the economic Trinity as a crucial theological task.⁴ Kilmartin first postulates the need for a trinitarian grounding of symbol: "The Word is the 'real symbol' of the Father. A real symbol exists when there is unity of being between the symbol and the symbolized."⁵ The articulation of such a theology also presupposes a trinitarian anthropology, Christology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology, since our knowledge of the Trinity is grounded in the work of the Spirit, as seen in the Christ event.

After reviewing some contemporary models in trinitarian theology and Christology, Kilmartin asks: If God has indeed formed new personal relationships with creatures by which they are capable of personal communication with God, how does their response to God's offer

³ Ibid. 140–41.

⁴ The work of Catherine M. LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991) should also be noted here, especially her discussion of the liturgical connections (111–42).

⁵ Edward Kilmartin, *Christian Liturgy: Theology and Practice 1: Systematic Theology of Liturgy* (Kansas City, Mo.: Sheed & Ward, 1988) 106.

of self-communication affect God? Ascending Christology and the bestowal model of the Trinity would suggest that "the prayer of Jesus is the historical revelation of the trinitarian dialogue." The prayer of that High Priest for us elicits the Father's offering the Spirit to enable the response of faith, in and through a purely divine act.⁶

In turn, the prayer of the Church shows the union of the liturgical community with their High Priest. When the Church implores the Father in union with Christ and in the power of the Spirit to bestow that same Spirit of sanctification, not only the dialogical structure of liturgy but also the "christological-Trinitarian dimension of christian liturgy in all its forms" is effectively manifested.⁷ Kilmartin's ultimate position is that there is only one liturgy, that of the fully realized economic Trinity as the heavenly liturgy, and its earthly realization in the worship of the pilgrim people of God.⁸

In brief, although Lies and Kilmartin have different approaches to developing the trinitarian implications of *Realsymbol* and symbolic causality, their starting point is the original insight of Rahner that the triune God is the foundation of all symbolic reality and efficacy.

Interdisciplinary Concerns of the Subject Model

The human situation in which worship and sacrament find their scope offers both help and hindrance to the fruitful and knowing participation for which Vatican II called. The human sciences share with theology some common concerns about that situation. Thus the need for some interdisciplinary dialogue in liturgical and sacramental theology has been recognized for some time. The work of individual theologians who have attempted to incorporate this dialogue into their work will be discussed shortly. But first we need to look at projects in which the interdisciplinary element is a major feature.

A particularly interesting example of such an effort is the North American series *Alternative Futures for Worship*, a seven-volume work published under the general editorship of Bernard Lee.⁹ An introductory volume dealt with the classical notions of general sacramental theology from psychological, sociological, and systematic points of view. Each of the seven sacraments was treated in interdisciplinary fashion in the other volumes by a team of experts from different fields working together.

Behind this effort there were certain convictions. First, that liturgical reform is a continual process. Second, that good theology reflects as

⁶ Ibid. 172.

⁷ Ibid. 174.

⁸ Ibid. 196–97.

⁹ *Alternative Futures for Worship*, ed. Bernard Lee (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1987).

well as clarifies the faith experience as it is lived out in the world, so that studies, for example, on human development are germane to sacrament. Third, that both theology and the human sciences have a role in interpreting and "constructing" the world in which we live. Fourth, that providing alternative ritual forms for the sacraments serves to concretize the insights shared by theology and the human sciences.¹⁰ The new rites are not intended for use but serve as a means of exploring in imaginative ways the meaning and possibilities of the sacrament under discussion. While individual volumes may vary in the originality of insight and applicability of the praxis suggested, the overall project is impressive in its scope and its method.

A more traditional approach to interdisciplinarity is taken in a volume of the German series of liturgical studies *Gottesdienst der Kirche: Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft*.¹¹ Since, as the subtitle indicates, verbal and nonverbal forms of liturgical expression are of interest, individual authors deal with the forms of human expression found in music and word, natural elements and technical means, liturgical garments and insignia, and liturgical space and its furnishings. The use of interdisciplinary work is uneven. A. Sequeria, for example, relies on the religious phenomenology of Mircea Eliade, Gerardus van der Leeuw, and Mary Douglas, and on the anthropology of Frederik Buytendijk, Desmond Morris, and Johan Huizinga, as well as on a daunting bibliography on movement and dance. Karl-Heinrich Bieritz, in dealing with the use of word, employs the works of Hans Georg Gadamer, John Langshaw Austin, John R. Searle, and Umberto Eco; but Rupert Berger uses few interdisciplinary resources in treating of the liturgical elements of bread, wine, oil, and water. While the contributors to the volume are generally theologians, a noted exception is the musicologist and conductor, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, known for his advocacy of "authentic" performance. As a result, the volume is reminiscent of some work done in the seventies¹² and is more the product of theologians familiar with literature in the human sciences than a work of interdisciplinarity in the full sense of the term.

¹⁰ Each volume on a particular sacrament offers alternative rituals which represent both the process and the eventual consensus of the team of experts contributing to the volume.

¹¹ *Gestalt des Gottesdienstes: Sprachliche und nichtsprachliche Ausdrucksformen*, ed. Rupert Berger (Regensburg: Pustet, 1990).

¹² Two well-known examples are Werner Jetter, *Symbol und Ritual: Anthropologische Elemente im Gottesdienst* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), and Alois Hahn et al., *Anthropologie des Kults: Die Bedeutung des Kults für das Überleben des Menschen* (Freiburg im Br.: Herder, 1977).

In his later work on sacraments,¹³ pursuing his earlier insistence on personal participation in liturgy,¹⁴ Karl Rahner emphasized the relation of sacrament's symbolic expression to the presence of God in the world and in ordinary life, believing that this makes sacraments accessible even to those who would claim no religious sense. Michael Skelley has taken this insight into sacrament as the liturgy of the world and contextualized it within Rahner's larger concerns: the experience of transcendence, the reality of the human person as embodied spirit, the nature of grace as God's self-communication, and the experience of God.¹⁵ Skelley draws out Rahner's seminal ideas on the nature of basic sacrament and on the exhibitiv character of the Word of God. His achievement is to synthesize Rahner's sacramental concerns expressed over four decades and to remind us of the pervasive influence of this thought.

In an earlier work, now translated into English, Herbert Vorgrimler likewise pursues Rahner's insight into the nature of symbol and into the worship of the Church within God's world.¹⁶ He explains sacrament as a relational event within an intentional field, and he appeals for its understanding to such disciplines as depth psychology, the philosophy of language, cultural anthropology, communications theory, ethnology, and social psychology. Nonetheless, these disciplines do not greatly affect the way in which Vorgrimler systematically outlines a contemporary sacramental theology in what is meant to be a general introduction to the subject.

Complementing his work already discussed, Edward Kilmartin has also argued for the anthropological dimension of sacrament, but bases his work on an older classical view that God created this world to share divine goodness.¹⁷ Worship is primarily directed toward the fulfillment of creatures in sharing this goodness. Sacramental rites are enhanced in their doxological and rhetorical language with images inspired by all dimensions of human living. In particular, anthropology's emphases on the body as primary symbol of the human person and on

¹³ See "On the Theology of Worship," in *Theological Investigations* 19 (New York: Crossroad, 1983) 141–49.

¹⁴ For example, "Considerations on the Active Role of the Person in the Sacramental Event," in *Theological Investigations* 14 (New York: Seabury, 1976) 161–84.

¹⁵ Michael Skelley, *The Liturgy of the World: Karl Rahner's Theology of Worship* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1991).

¹⁶ Herbert Vorgrimler, *Sacramental Theology*, trans. L. M. Maloney (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992).

¹⁷ Edward Kilmartin, "Theology of the Sacraments," in *Alternative Futures for Worship* 1.123–75. Kilmartin here appeals to the thought of Irenaeus of Lyons.

the role of interpretative word are crucial for understanding the human situation, and they challenge the theologian to deal with human complexity in discussing symbolic action.

Pursuing this line of thought, Kilmartin defines symbolic competence as "the capacity of a Christian to link traditional liturgical symbols and interpretative word with one's adult personal symbols."¹⁸ Like Vorgrimler, he points to the human sciences as underlining the Christian conviction that the experience of the holy is found in human situations in which ultimate meaning is raised: "the profane is always potentially holy if its deepest meaning is penetrated."¹⁹ The phenomenological approach is particularly apt for sensitizing contemporary people to the importance of their human experience as symbol of the transcendent.

Non-Rahnerian Approaches to Sacrament and Subject

Some works on the interdisciplinary character of sacramental theology are less directly related to the work of Karl Rahner, while they are still concerned with the participation of the subject in sacrament. Theodor Schneider in his outline of sacramental theology speaks of sacrament as a "communicative experience," employing an expression much used among German theologians.²⁰ This dynamic concept of interchange derived from a sociological model of knowledge grounds the social group's development and continuity. It reflects the work of Jürgen Habermas who has long influenced German theological circles.

Among Habermas's pivotal concerns has been the question of communicative action in society.²¹ Helmut Peukert applied Habermas's method to foundational issues, arguing that theology is concerned with the reality of the limits of experience and with the types of communicative action that might serve as responses to these concerns.²² Norbert Mette advanced the dialogue with his discussion of praxis in practical theology within Habermas's perspective of authentic communication as an essential factor in honest and transforming praxis.²³

The notion of communicative competence resonates with sacramen-

¹⁸ Ibid. 143.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ *Zeichen der Nähe Gottes*. For the various ways in which communication models have influenced liturgical and sacramental theologians, see Franz Kohlschein, "Symbol und Kommunikation als Schlüsselbegriffe einer Theologie und Theorie der Liturgie," *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 35 (1985) 200-18.

²¹ See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols., trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1984, 1987).

²² Helmut Peukert, *Science, Action, and Fundamental Theology: Toward a Theology of Communicative Action*, trans. James Bohman (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1984).

²³ Norbert Mette, *Theorie der Praxis* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1978).

tal and liturgical concerns, since it deals with linguistically mediated actions and behavioral expectations. In Schneider's work, once the sacraments are viewed as such communicative actions that enable the community to appropriate what it celebrates, then a highly dynamic conception of sacramental experience is possible.²⁴

Josef Meyer zu Schlochtern offers another example of the use of this model to reexamine the relationship between Church and sacrament.²⁵ After reviewing some of the classic positions (Rahner, Ratzinger, Semmelroth, Boff), he builds on the work of Peukert, Mette, Arens, Hünermann, and others, demonstrating how the dynamic notion of communicative action permits a more accurate notion of the actions of the Church and the work of the Spirit of Christ in the sacramental participation of the gathered and symbolizing community.

Alexander Ganoczy in his outline of sacramental theory offers a communicative model of sacrament, based on a different approach than that of Habermas.²⁶ He appeals more directly to the ordinary ways of human response and behavior. On this basis, he criticizes the familiar encounter model of Edward Schillebeeckx, because it neglects the legitimate anthropological requirements of such a model. A communications model has to insist on the principle of interaction and on its corollaries (reaction, reciprocity, reception, and nonreception), while giving more weight to the notion of Christ as the mediator who has overcome the radical breakdown of communications between God and humankind. Within this development, the sacraments are understood in terms of verbal and nonverbal communication in which Christians participate in the communicative process of the faith community which in turn is undergirded by the self-communication of God.

Ganoczy then turns to the intrinsic nature of symbol as communicative and looks at some of its components. It may be viewed as a linguistic structure in which verbal and nonverbal information is conveyed and participants are both "senders" and "receivers" who employ universal, communal, and personal codes of communication. Communication theory also makes a helpful distinction between analogical communication charged with affect and digital communication which

²⁴ Besides the work of Schneider, see Rolf Zerfass, "Gottesdienst als Handlungsfeld der Kirche," *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 38 (1988) 30–58.

²⁵ *Sakrament Kirche: Wirken Gottes im Handeln der Menschen* (Freiburg im Br.: Herder, 1992).

²⁶ *An Introduction to Catholic Sacramental Theology*, trans. William Thomas and Anthony M. Sherman (New York: Paulist, 1984). Ganoczy relies principally on the work of Hans-Dieter Bastian, "Wie christlicher Glaube funktioniert," in *Kommunikation* (Stuttgart-Berlin: Kreuz, 1972). For an overview, see Arno Schilson, "Symbolwirklichkeit und Sakrament," *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 40 (1990) 26–52.

is principally conceptual. As Ganoczy points out, Vatican II called for both types of participation. Finally, since symbols are always for a particular person, group, or culture, and belong to historical time, there is always the risk of forgetting the venerable axiom *liturgia semper reformanda*.

Another notable effort at the interdisciplinary mode is Bernard Cooke's *The Distancing of God: The Ambiguity of Symbol in History and Theology*.²⁷ The focus of the book is that God's presence is either facilitated or blocked by symbolic activity and thought in different historical periods. The major thesis of the book is thus indicated by its title. Cooke scrutinizes three types of presence: a kairotic presence linked to sacred places, persons, and times; an englobing presence which facilitated participation in the divine; and the indwelling of God with humans, exemplified in Christ's relation with God and with humans. Cooke's analysis of the patristic, medieval, and post-Tridentine periods would seem to support his assertion that there is a gradual weakening of the symbolic world in which participation flourishes.

In the final four chapters of the book, Cooke concisely summarizes some of the discussion of the social sciences about symbol to support his assertion that the distancing of God from human experience is being reversed in our time. He points to the impressive depth of ecclesial theology and to some of the gains of the liturgical reforms, especially the concern with more active participation and symbolic thinking about human living in Christ. From his fruitful dialogue with the human sciences, I would point to several corollaries: the importance of ritual action in complementing symbolic causation; the connection of sacramental causation with subjective awareness as well as with objective symbols; the import of psychological structures for the meaning linked to sacramental symbols; the careful analysis of symbolic events and the function of ritual in creating social structure, which is considerably clarified by the methodologies of the social sciences.

Another important example of contextualizing the discussion of symbol is David Power's work on the symbolic nature of liturgy.²⁸ Power begins his study by examining the contemporary situation, emphasizing that "the symbolic belongs to the public forum of life lived in society and community."²⁹ Citing both cultural dissonance and rapidly changing economic situations, he draws out their corollaries for any

²⁷ Bernard Cooke, *The Distancing of God: The Ambiguity of Symbol in History and Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990).

²⁸ David N. Power, *Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic Nature of Liturgy* (New York: Pueblo, 1984).

²⁹ *Ibid.* 5.

symbolic system. With irrefutable logic, Power then argues that faith is premised on conversion in the way of relating to symbols. It in turn entails a welcoming of the transcendent and its radical critique of our cultural, social, and political world.

In a wide-ranging analysis of symbol, Power insists on the importance of multiple possibilities of meaning in symbols. Here his use of Ricoeur, Langer, and others is both clarifying and insightful.³⁰ His analysis of symbolic language results in some stimulating insights on the nature of liturgy, summed up in the sentence: "The liturgy is an action wherein the testimony of God is heard and appropriated, the experience of the community is transformed, and a godly presence disclosed."³¹ This concise definition includes the nature of proclamation about Jesus Christ through the use of appropriate root metaphors and the appropriation of this testimony in both lamentation and thanksgiving.

Finally, among the many valuable conclusions that Power draws from his unfolding of the riches of symbol, his criteria for validating sacramental practice are especially important. He calls for an integration of the language of ritual, myth, and metaphor, as well as for more attention to the cultural experience of our age. He then insists on the criterion of "the celebration's relation to the orthopraxis of gospel freedom and solidarity with the suffering."³² This last criterion tests the real connections between liturgy and ethics, between the experience of the cross and the suffering of this world.

A more recent publication, more related to the thought of Bernard Lonergan than to Rahner's, is the two-volume work of Donald Gelpi, which culminates his study of sacraments over a period of time.³³ This is his most serious effort to construct a systematic theology of sacrament in which an interdisciplinary approach is employed as a structural element. In the first volume, inspired by the implicit demands of the RCIA model, Gelpi sets forth a carefully wrought theology of conversion which serves as a consistent frame for discussing individual sacraments in the second volume. Besides the work of Bernard Lonergan, he refers to liberation and liturgical theology in constructing this model of conversion.

Gelpi first outlines five forms of conversion, namely, affective, intel-

³⁰ For a different approach using some of these same sources, see Iso Baumer, "Interaktion—Zeichen—Symbol," *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 31 (1981) 9–35.

³¹ Power, *Unsearchable Riches* 146. ³² *Ibid.* 213.

³³ Donald Gelpi, *Committed Worship: A Sacramental Theology for Converting Christians* 1: *Adult Conversion and Initiation*; 2: *The Sacraments of Ongoing Conversion* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1993).

lectual, moral, religious, and sociopolitical. He takes liturgy's presentation of the Paschal Mystery and foundational theology's preoccupation with primordial sacramentality into consideration, interpreting them within a comprehensive and challenging notion of conversion, concretizing this by autobiographical references. As a result, he poses the question: How ought a community of thoroughly converted Christians to worship sacramentally? In his delineation of the different dimensions of conversion, Gelpi exhibits a wide-ranging familiarity with related human sciences. It is sociopolitical conversion which provides the testing point for the other forms of conversion, since it authenticates them by deprivatizing them. At the same time, personal conversion "authenticates the activity which sociopolitical conversion inspires by supplying political activists with sound norms for judging between responsible and irresponsible institutional policies and executive decisions"³⁴ Not surprisingly, sociopolitical conversion is seen as the form most resisted, especially in a culture such as ours where privatized values are taken to be normative. On the other hand, the practical result of such conversion is a transvaluation of all social, political, and personal reality.

Having profiled the complexity of conversion, Gelpi proceeds to review the scriptural and systematic traditions which provide the basis for the notion of conversion. What sets this review apart is a wide familiarity with recent scriptural exegesis and the creative reading of traditional concepts such as the theological virtues and the different forms of grace. Much in the style of Rahner and Lonergan, Gelpi does not usually footnote his sources, but he gives comprehensive bibliographies at the end of his second volume. He then develops and tests his insights by treating "the social dynamics of sanctification" and "the socialization into the family of God" which entails an exposition of his trinitarian and Christological foundations for sacrament. Gelpi's strength here is his systematic interweaving and recapitulation of earlier insights on conversion with these larger questions. The final chapter of the first volume returns to the question of the catechumenate and integrates the previous material into a fresh perspective on this institutionalized form of conversion.

Conclusion

To sum up this survey, we may note how the systematic presentation of sacrament in Rahnerian perspective relates to the life of the Trinity, while on the side of the human subject interdisciplinarity is

³⁴ Ibid. 1.45.

important. There is a growing rigor in the methodologies employed and wider familiarity with subspecialities within the human sciences. This has revitalized the areas of sacramental thinking that had become rather abstract and analytical and gives promise of further creative insight.

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2. LIBERATION THEOLOGY

The early works of liberation theologians on sacramental theology followed up on some of Rahner's insights by weaving together the theology of the Church and the theology of sacrament in a way that fitted the Latin-American economic and political situation. We shall first consider two of these early authors.

Juan Luis Segundo

Already in 1971, the Uruguayan Juan Luis Segundo raised serious challenges to the conventional liturgical and sacramental practice of the time, particularly regarding triumphalism in cult and church life, in the face of serious economic and social injustices. In *The Sacraments Today*,¹ he argues for a more authentic sense of community in liturgical celebration, a chief means toward which is the formation and fostering of base communities.² He urges a positive interpretation to the "secularization" process to retrieve the necessary prophetic and life-challenging aspects of liturgy.³ He thus rejects the dualistic separation of sacred from profane and describes liturgy as truly liberating of persons from "demons" such as inequitable land and wealth distribution regrettably inherent in the social structures of underdeveloped countries.⁴ Segundo critiques consumerist approaches to the use of sacraments and demonstrates that a sacramental system can in practice support systemic social exploitation.⁵ Consequently he argues forcefully for deeper exploration and appreciation of the prophetic dimension of liturgy as celebrating what has not yet been accomplished, in that all of life is not yet pervaded by Christ's liberative Pasch.⁶

The book's structure and use of magisterial sources clearly reflect the beginnings of the move from the conventional post-Tridentine con-

¹ Originally published as *Los sacramentos hoy* (Buenos Aires: Carlos Lohle, 1971); English transl. by John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1974).

² *Ibid.* 10, 32–40.

³ *Ibid.* 15–20. In this connection see Luis Maldonado, *Secularización de la Liturgia* (Madrid: Marova, 1970).

⁴ *Ibid.* 98.

⁵ *Ibid.* 34–37, 53–62, 100–4.

⁶ *Ibid.* 36, 80–82, 98.

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⁵ *Ibid.* 34–37, 53–62, 100–4.

⁶ *Ibid.* 36, 80–82, 98.

cerns about the institution of sacraments, their efficaciousness, and the number seven. The magisterial sources on which he mainly relies are the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World of Vatican II, as well as the documents from the (1968) Medellin Conference of the Latin American bishops. In addition to these, *Evangelii nuntiandi* of Paul VI and the Final Document from the (1979) Puebla meeting of the Latin American bishops' conference will influence later sacramental writings that take up the issues raised by Segundo.

Leonardo Boff

Somewhat later than Segundo's book are two works by Leonardo Boff of Brazil, in which Boff articulates the sacramentality intrinsic to sacraments and what might be called a sacramental ecclesiology. In the brief essay *Sacraments of Life, Life of the Sacraments: Story Theology*,⁷ his aim is to disclose the way sacraments express the interplay among human beings (especially how they view life and communicate human life), the world, and God. Boff writes in order to "recapture the religious richness contained in the symbolic and sacramental universe that inhabits our daily life." Since sacraments are "basic constituents of human life . . . faith sees grace present in the most elementary acts of life."⁸ Throughout, sacraments are viewed *sub specie humanitatis*, to use Boff's term. Sacramental language is essentially evocative, self-involving, and performance-oriented. Sacraments refer to sacred moments and places in order to disclose the sacredness of everyday life, and to engage participants in acts of redemption here and now. They also aim to induce conversion and to change human praxis. In simple language that is often autobiographical, Boff discloses how persons (his father and his school teacher), nature (light), and things (bread, house) can be sacramental, often linking these narratives with principles of sacramental theology (such as their symbolic substructure). The concluding chapter summarizes in a systematic way what he has articulated for popular consumption.

Boff's style and purpose in *Church: Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*⁹ are similar. In arguing for a "church born of the people's faith" Boff asserts that the base community is a new and original way of living Christian faith, of organizing

⁷ Originally published as *Los Sacramentos da Vida e a Vida dos Sacramentos* (Pietropolis: Vozes, 1975); English transl. by John Drury (Washington: Pastoral, 1987).

⁸ *Ibid.* 7.

⁹ Originally published as *Iglesia: Charisma e poder* (Pietropolis: Vozes, 1981); English transl. by John W. Diercksmeier (New York: Crossroad, 1985).

the community around the Word, around the sacraments (when possible), and around new ministries exercised by lay people. His broad notion of sacramentality from the previous book informs his opinion that "the wider understanding of sacraments [views them] as signs of a grace that is offered constantly and [is] present to humanity, rather than as the instruments of a preexisting grace."¹⁰ This allows for "the rise of a rich ecclesial sacramentality (the entire Church as sacrament) with much creativity in its celebrations and a deep sense of the sacred—all belonging to the people."¹¹ In a pivotal section where he explores the meaning of *sacramentum* as uniting the dialectical notions of "identity" and "non identity," Boff's reliance on Rahner and Schillebeeckx is apparent. He writes that "identity is affirmed through the sacrament: grace is present in the mediation, the parousia of the mystery is made present . . . shining forth through a word, made symbolically corporeal through a gesture, and communicated through a community." Yet nonidentity is also affirmed in sacraments, because "God and his grace are not imprisoned within this or that sacramental expression. There is an absence in the sacrament, despite the presence of grace. Mystery is revealed in the sacrament but it is still a mystery. One cannot identify the mystery with the sacrament; there is nonidentity."¹² For Boff, the category *sacramentum* serves to sustain his dialectical thesis throughout the book, and from this most traditional Catholic category he is able to articulate the role of sacraments in one's faith life and the role of the Church as serving the kingdom in the world.

Segundo Galilea

That neither the interpretation of sacramentality nor the experience of base communities is without ambiguity in experience and appreciation is clear from some important Latin American writings on "popular religiosity" which deserve attention at this point.

The most important Latin American voice taking popular religiosity seriously as a theological and ecclesial phenomenon is that of Segundo Galilea.¹³ His studies assert the givenness of manifestations of "pop-

¹⁰ Ibid. 16.

¹¹ Ibid. 9.

¹² Ibid. 78–79.

¹³ Especially helpful are Galilea's essays, "Religiosidad Popular," in *Religiosidad popular y pastoral* (Madrid: Cristianidad, 1979) 16–92; "The Theology of Liberation and the Place of Folk Religion," in *Concilium 136: What is Religion? An Inquiry for Christian Theology*, eds. Mircea Eliade and David Tracy (New York: Seabury, 1980) 40–45; and parts of *El Camino de la Espiritualidad* (Bogota: Ediciones Paulinas, 1982), English transl., *The Way of Living Faith*, by John W. Diercksmeier (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988).

ular religiosity/Catholicism"¹⁴ as persistent and lively facts of life which reflect and espouse genuine Christian values about life and death and solidarity with the divine. Forms and expressions of popular religiosity tend to be devotional, affective (if not sentimental), symbolic, and ritualistic.¹⁵ What might be called an innate "sacramentality" is seen in popular Catholicism's use of sacred places, objects, and rituals to invoke God and the saints. Galilea repeatedly asserts that popular religion is a fact and need of oppressed people.¹⁶

Chief among the questions which liberation theologians raise in this regard is the question, "Is folk religion freeing?" Initially, Galilea asserts, theologians and pastoral workers (from the 1950s on) judged it negatively, because, rather than liberating the poor from exploitation and oppression, folk religion fostered resignation to their status in the name of faith and providence. Later, many argued positively that within popular religiosity the poor find their own voice, their own faith expression, and that by thus appropriating their own world and their own resources, they thereby sow the seeds of a conscious eschatological hope and liberation. Others offer the more cautious assessment that this liberating potential of popular religiosity needs to be proven. Galilea urges that popular religiosity be respected as a given and be used as a tool in evangelization and liberation. He argues that such evangelization should not aim to change external practices so much as to infuse them with deeper meaning and Christian values. Evangelization is a complex and ambiguous task, one that must respect the givenness of people's religious and devotional lives and not seek to transmit gospel values in a "pure" form. Evangelization can allow Christian attitudes to emerge from popular religious practices and can also deepen the kind of interiority which external expressions are to foster. Evangelization presumes the value of base communities in fostering the evangelical life, and it fosters the inherent link between popular religion and liberation theology. Drawing on Puebla's final document, Galilea asserts that in undertaking evangelization in Latin America

¹⁴ While distinguishing these terms, asserting that "popular religiosity" is wider than "popular Catholicism" (*Religiosidad Popular* 20–21) Galilea uses the terms interchangeably. Similarly helpful are the distinctions he makes between popular religion in urban and rural settings (*ibid.* 28–43) and his observation that at least two approaches of liberation theologians should be distinguished: (1) that of Argentina along with parts of Chile and Brazil, and (2) that of Mexico, El Salvador, and other parts of Chile and Brazil ("Theology of Liberation" 42–44).

¹⁵ *Religiosidad Popular* 20–27.

¹⁶ For what follows, see Galilea, "Theology of Liberation" 40–44.

one must be conscious of the need to reinterpret the expressions and symbols of the popular religion in a spirit of liberation.

Francisco Taborda

Evangelization and liberation are chief components of the current and more substantial work on sacraments undertaken by two more recent authors, Francisco Taborda and Antonio Gonzalez Dorado.

Francisco Taborda of Brazil argues that the notion of feast is allied to that of sacrament to bring out the emancipatory possibilities of the sacramental commemoration and celebration of Christ's pasch. Taborda aims to review and refashion sacramental theology in the light of the concrete situation of Latin American Catholicism which finds its identity in the liberating historical praxis of freeing the poor from their poverty.¹⁷ The division of the book into three parts reflects Taborda's aim and scope. In part 1 he sketches the present situation regarding faith in Latin America, insisting on the transformation of a society that is presently unjust. In Part 2 he establishes from an anthropological perspective the meaning of and relationship between celebrating and living the phenomenon of "the feast." In Part 3 he elaborates on the notion of the feast and the sacraments as celebrations of the memorial of the Lord; "feast" is a point of juncture between engagement in Christian sacraments and the Christian life.¹⁸

Early on Taborda forcefully asserts that "feast" carries with it the implication of action in historical and human praxis. Thus his highly reasoned (rather philosophical) understanding of "feast" implies how one lives one's faith in human life. He believes that in Latin America today the requisite expression of this praxis is liberation.¹⁹ In this expression the pivotal term "praxis" is modified by "faith," "communal," and "of/in the Lord," all of which are used to preserve the Christian spirit and meaning of that pivotal term.²⁰

¹⁷ Originally published as *Sacramento, praxis e festa* (Sao Paulo: CESEP, 1987) trans. into Spanish by Alfonso Ortiz Garcia, *Sacramentos, praxis y fiesta* (Madrid: Ediciones Paulinas, 1987) which edition is cited here. Also translated into German, *Sakramente: Praxis und Fest*, Bibliothek Theologie der Befreiung (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1988). In addition, see Taborda's articles "Sacramentos, praxis e festa: Critica e autocritica," *Perspectiva Teologica* 21 (1989) 85-99; and "Vida Crista e sacramentos," *Perspectiva Teologica* 21 (1989) 227-36.

¹⁸ Taborda explains in the Introduction (14) that another helpful way of appreciating sacraments is to see them as symbols and inherently symbolic. But he argues that for him "feast" is a more precise and less polyvalent term to describe sacraments.

¹⁹ *Sacramentos, praxis y fiesta* 25-27. ²⁰ *Ibid.* 25, 34-39.

That human life is more than praxis leads to an appreciation of the book's thesis: that humans need to celebrate the feast. Here Taborda relies principally on the work of Peter Hünemann from the University of Münster, as well as on Hugo Rahner and Johan Huizinga.²¹ Where he relates his understanding of feast with notions of symbol his reliance on Karl Rahner, Paul Ricoeur and Jose Maria Castillo is apparent and acknowledged.²² For Taborda, there can be no historical praxis without engagement in symbolic language and symbolic gestures, some of which are Christian sacraments. The nature of the human person demands a balance between praxis and the feast. He continually reasserts his thesis that engaging in liberating praxis in Latin America today means working for a more just society. He argues that the aim of human life is not to free the human person from work or praxis or working for a more equal society. Rather it is to free participants to engage in the work of constructing a more human world, free from labor that is alienating or the result of violence or coercion. Sacraments appreciated as feasts convey many meanings. In a situation of inequality, a sacrament could be the impetus toward praxis for a just society. But at the same time it could be the means of reinforcing society's inequities and inequitable structures.

In the last part of the book Taborda merges his understanding of sacraments, feast, and praxis with Christian revelation and sacramental celebration. Relying on the work of Leonardo Boff he describes the infrastructure of sacraments as containing narrative and symbolic language, as *kairoi* within the chronology of time and life, as intrinsically Christocentric and as expressive memorials of Christ's Paschal Mystery in and for the Church. Classic expressions from Catholic doctrine on sacraments are apparent here (e.g. *significando causant*), and the Tridentine exposition on sacraments frames part of his discussion (e.g. *ex opere operato*). However, in these sections he emphasizes the symbolic interaction intrinsic to sacraments through which they may be said to "cause" and he sustains the gratuity of divine initiative as foundational for sacramental engagement.

Antonio Gonzalez Dorado

Taborda's method and thesis as well as the way he contextualizes his treatment of sacraments within Latin America today have been influ-

²¹ Ibid. 42–43, n. 1.

²² Ibid. 62–89, and nn. 1 and 4. Of particular note is José Maria Castillo's *Simbolos de libertad: Teología de los sacramentos* (Salamanca: Sigueme, 1981) because of its intrinsic worth and its current influence in Europe and Latin America.

ential on the work of other theologians, not least on *Los Sacramentos del Evangelio*²³ by Antonio Gonzalez Dorado. This sizable volume is a substantial contribution to the series of basic texts of which it is a part.²⁴ The synthesis it achieves is framed within the contemporary Latin American context, and listens seriously to Puebla's plea for a theology of liturgy and sacraments that takes into account the human and ecclesial context of Latin America, the preferential option for the poor, and the contemporary church project of liberating evangelization to bring the Church to a new birth.²⁵ For Gonzalez Dorado, this involves, among other things, engaging in direct criticism of decadent sacramental practice, evaluating the link between church renewal and the liturgical reform, and examining the relationship between sacraments and the contemporary culture, popular religiosity, and ecumenism. He does not separate or oppose evangelization and sacramentalization. Rather he prefers to emphasize that liturgy and sacraments are to be celebrated in the context of pastoral life lived in harmony with the liturgy, especially its evangelizing function.

Gonzalez Dorado's work is comprehensive. In ten chapters he deals with sacraments in history, sacraments as symbols of faith, the origin and evangelizing mission of the sacraments, sacraments for the upbuilding of a more evangelizing and evangelized Church, sacraments and the witness of the gospel, sacraments and the evangelizing cult, the purpose and effects of sacraments in history, ministers as dispensers of the mysteries of God, the relationship of sacraments to the commitment to witness to the gospel, the necessity of sacraments, and the sacrament of solidarity. Each topic is treated historically, based on sources such as the Scriptures, Tertullian, Augustine, Aquinas, and the contemporary magisterium—with special attention to Paul VI's *Evangelii nuntiandi* and the texts from Medellín and Puebla. Gonzalez Dorado explains that he uses Tertullian, Augustine, and Aquinas because of parallels between their time and now. Tertullian is pertinent because of the similarity of the age of the martyrs and today's oppression in Latin America; Augustine, because his task of explaining sacraments to the uneducated is similar to the contemporary challenge; and Aquinas, because his time resembled our own in its profound economic, political, and social change. He acknowledges his reliance on

²³ *Los Sacramentos del Evangelio: Sacramentología fundamental y organica* (Santa Fe de Bogota: CELAM, 1991).

²⁴ Entitled "Teología para la Evangelización liberadora en America Latina," the series is published under the auspices of CELAM and is written as basic texts for seminarians and future evangelizers in Latin America.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 18–19. The germane paragraphs from Puebla are nos. 916, 940, 942.

Schillebeeckx, Rahner, Congar and Borobio,²⁶ as well as on Segundo and Boff. Throughout he treats the rites phenomenologically, is attentive to their liturgical structure and content, and tries to determine their theological meaning.

Among his more helpful methodological contributions is the way Gonzalez Dorado contextualizes familiar statements from theologians and the magisterium to determine precisely what was meant by what was said. He weaves issues from contemporary Latin American religious and sacramental practice with the traditional themes he treats. For example, the chapter on sacraments in history utilizes the theologians already cited as sources and then treats the evolution of sacramental practice in Latin America from colonial times to today.²⁷ And he consistently and helpfully treats the interrelationship of theology and pastoral need, the relationship of anthropology and sacraments, sacraments as expressive of the wide reality of *mysterion*, understood as God's will for universal salvation and liberation, and the relation of contemporary theologians and the magisterium to pastoral issues of the day.

Gonzalez Dorado's sacramentology is Christological and ecclesiological, with an emphasis on soteriology. This is complemented by treatment of the Spirit's role in sacramental celebration and in the life of the Church.²⁸ Classical categories of sacramental theology receive fresh perspectives here, for example, symbolic causality as a way of discussing *ex opere operato*. When discussing the number seven Gonzalez Dorado articulates his fundamental understanding of sacraments as festive encounters of the Christian community with Christ and the Church. In Latin America today the "essential value" of sacraments is found in their being moments of "liberating evangelization,"²⁹ a phrase which recurs throughout the book.

Among the more challenging and creative sections are those concerning ministers as dispensers of the mysteries of God and the requirement that those who celebrate sacraments witness to the gospel. The term "minister" is relative, since Christ is the eternal High Priest who is the agent of all sacraments, acting through both a ministerial and common priesthood. Gonzalez Dorado prefers the terms *diakonia* and *oikonomos* to describe sacramental ministers of Christ whose prime function in ministry is to integrate sacraments, life, and wit-

²⁶ The first of Dionisio Borobio's three-volume work, *La celebración en la Iglesia* (Salamanca: Sigueme, 1985-), is frequently cited and quoted, evidencing Gonzalez Dorado's concern to treat liturgy and sacraments together.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 89-108.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 414-26.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 255-56.

ness. For him the classical term for sacramental power, *potestas*, is best understood as the power to serve.³⁰ With regard to intentionality in sacraments he argues that the category of effective intentionality respects human freedom and stresses that "intention" is a deliberate human act in relation to a specific object. He believes that the major issue in Latin America today is the divorce between faith and life and the incoherence between participation in sacraments and the absence of a vital faith life among participants.³¹

Discussing contemporary ecumenical issues, Gonzalez Dorado acknowledges the commonality of baptism, and that many of the problems connected with Eucharist reflect the deeper issues regarding ordination. He reiterates a main theme of the book when he asserts that the crucial dialogue among churches not only deals with sacramental issues but has to do with working toward the liberation of the poor and the oppressed for whom sacramental activity is a source of universal salvation and liberation.³²

Many of the book's main themes are reprised in the final chapter on the necessity of sacraments. Sacraments are an essential part of the sharing in the good news and in the salvation God intends through Christ. They celebrate and effect the gospel here and now, and are intrinsically related to the wider world and its salvation and sanctification in God.³³ In his conclusion, he offers a moving description of how sacraments, by their interior dynamism, transform and enliven faith that is weak or dead into a living faith that is vital and strong. Finally, he makes a plea for proper sacramental practice as exemplified in Mary's Magnificat, which he argues is the credo of believers and the canticle of liberating evangelization, the subtheme of this book.

Conclusion

This survey shows how earlier works on sacramental theology introduced the theme of liberation into sacramental theology through a critique of sacramental practice and sought to probe the idea of sacramentality. Writings on popular religiosity added fresh accents to the themes of liberation and symbolic expression. This broadening of the field of investigation has been systematically incorporated into the work of recent writers.

Some writers on the northern continents have developed a relation with this theology. Though not fully worked out in relation to sacrament, one can spot its influence in the approach to memory, including liturgical memory, in Schillebeeckx and Metz. Some comments found

³⁰ Ibid. 449–62.

³² Ibid. 484–89, 577.

³¹ Ibid. 465–77.

³³ Ibid. 538–77.

throughout Schillebeeckx's *Christ* indicate some attentiveness to the liberation themes articulated here. Schillebeeckx states, for example, that Jesus' words and praxis reveal "God's countenance turned toward [humanity], the countenance of God who is concerned for all, especially for the humble of the earth, all those who are crucified."³⁴ Regarding sacramental liturgy specifically, he argues that sacraments are "anticipatory, mediating signs of salvation, that is healed and reconciled life. And given our historical situation, at the same time they are symbols of protest serving to unmask the life that is not yet reconciled in the specific dimension of our history."³⁵ He adds, "there is in Christian symbolic action a powerful historical potential which can integrate mysticism and politics."³⁶ At the same time sacraments are crucial, if the Christian praxis of liberation is not to degenerate into an "alienating claim of self-liberation."³⁷

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3. POSTMODERN APPROACHES

Postmodern critique is rooted in Heidegger's critique of Western metaphysics and in Nietzsche's critique of the will to power. A critique of ontotheology negates the analogy of being and all thought of God as foundation of created being or as first cause, since this is to think of God within the limits of human concept, even when it is modified by the *via negationis* and the *via eminentiae*.

In sacramental theology, neither the thought of God as primary cause nor the Rahnerian understanding of sacrament as symbol of the Church suffices, for both risk confining the mystery within the horizons of human consciousness. Two works of postmodern theologies of sacrament that in different ways look for a new starting point in the language of revelation are examined here.

Sacrament of God's Salvific Event: Louis-Marie Chauvet

Applying a postmodernist critique of the Western metaphysical tradition to sacramental theology, the French theologian Louis-Marie Chauvet¹ intends his work to be not only a theology of sacrament in

³⁴ *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord.*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Seabury, 1980) 768.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 836.

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¹ Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbole et Sacrement: Une relecture sacramentelle de l'existence chrétienne* (Paris: Cerf, 1987). This book was preceded in 1979 by *Du symbolique au symbole* (Paris: Cerf, 1979) and is complemented by quite a large number of articles

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the traditional sense, but a symbolic theology of the whole order of salvation, looked at from within sacramental practice. To speak of the *symbolic* rather than simply of *symbol* avoids taking any symbol as adequate to the expression of the divine or fixing the gaze on symbols rather than on the one who approaches humanity through the symbolic.

Chauvet's major work, *Symbole et Sacrement*, is divided into four parts, under the titles: (a) from metaphysics to the symbolic, (b) the sacraments viewed from within the symbolic web of ecclesial faith, (c) symbolization of Christian identity, and (d) sacramentary and trinitarian Christology.

The first and foundational part sets the method for the rest of the book. Following a Heideggerian critique, Chauvet criticizes in particular the use of the notion of causality. It debases the gratuitous and personal character of divine grace celebrated in sacraments. The relation of mutual and reciprocal gift between lovers is a much better analogy for grace and sacrament than is that of the making or producing of things through instrumental causes. Language itself is instrumentalized when sacramental theory and practice is dominated by the notion of causality. Human communities must learn to see themselves as addressed and possessed by the language which they inherit rather than as the users of language systems to meet their programmatic purposes. As an alternative to metaphysical explanations, Chauvet appeals to studies of language and ritual to fill out this Heideggerian axiom. This he places within the framework of a Church which acts as a community of grace and of interpretation, maintaining its institutionally expressed commitment to originating event and to biblical word within the ritual practice of paschal memorial. In his section on the ecclesial symbolic web, he attends especially to the use of Scripture within liturgy, to symbolic rites, and to the ethics that develop within this context. The Bible has a primary and dominant role, since Chauvet follows the trend in the study of language which gives some primacy to writing over speech. Meaning is not constituted in the presence of self to self, nor of thought in speech, but to be clearly and firmly established it needs the distanciation of writing. Ethical decision and

on different aspects of sacrament and liturgy. The book has been extensively reviewed, particularly in French. Worthy of particular mention are the critiques offered by Dionisio Borobio, "El Modelo Simbolico de Sacramentologia," *Phase* 189 (1992) 229–46; André Haquin, "Vers une nouvelle théologie des sacrements," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 66 (1990) 355–67; Yves Labbé, "Réceptions théologiques de la postmodernité: A propos de deux livres récents de G. Lafont et L.-M. Chauvet," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 72 (1988) 397–426; Ghislain Lafont, review in *Ecclesia Orans* 5 (1988) 231–35.

sacramental celebration have in common the constant effort to retrieve into the present what has been set down in the Bible. Hence ethical practice serves as a gauge of adequate sacramental practice.

In his further discussion of sacrament Chauvet gives importance to the twofold basis of rituality and "institution." This latter word is given a human and dynamic meaning rather than a juridical one. What Chauvet points to in using the word is that there is a developed and sanctioned tradition of sacramental practice which cannot be treated in an arbitrary way, even though it is always open to critique and renewal, and must be given diversified expression in different situations. Chauvet uses Emile Benveniste's distinction between semi-otic entities and semantic entities to explain this. In a language system, the semiotic elements are finite and determined. Whoever wants to refer to something has to remain within this code. The semantic elements are the various possibilities of expressing reality that creative use of semiotic elements allows. Thus it is within the code of sacramental rites that sacramental celebration and sacramental renewal take place, but in a creative way. Hence through the notions of institution/church and instituting/instituted rite, Chauvet deals with the given of the sacraments and with their constant creativity.

In the fourth part of the book, Chauvet gives his Christological and trinitarian perspective on sacrament as gift.² The starting point, in keeping with language's priority, is the *lex orandi*, which gives primacy to the proclamation of the Pasch. According to this proclamation, God gives his love to humanity in the self-effacement of the divinity on the cross of Christ.³ Through the power of the Spirit and in the memorial of the cross, God continues to reveal himself as the other in human bodiliness, where he continues to efface himself. As sacramental celebration unfolds, it shows the presence of this self-giving and self-effacing God in the body of the Church which lives for others, and in the bodies of the suffering and despised of the earth whom in Christ's name and Spirit it serves. It is in the symbolic web of sacrament that this divine presence as other is manifest, as it is also in sacrament that the Church is configured to the Christ of the Pasch.

In an earlier part of the book, Chauvet had treated the relation between word and rite in terms of an idea of antiritual. This discussion of ritual is related to the word of the cross/Pasch, and to the anamnesis

² Chauvet, *Symbole et Sacrement* 459-548.

³ On this point, there is only a passing reference in Chauvet to von Balthasar. The principal influence is that of Breton, but he draws also on Jürgen Moltmann and Eberhard Jüngel.

and epiclesis which flow from the word, showing the nonidentity of God or of Christ with the ritual, indeed introducing an element of the antiritual, and breaking the pattern of the theophanic. Lest the idea of divine manifestation in visible symbol overshadow proclamation, there has to be the measure of antiritual in sacrament.⁴

This postmodern sacramental theology then makes its own uses of language and ritual studies, inclusive of an appeal to the antiritual factor in ritual development. Chauvet thus both explains how ritual functions in sacramental theology from a socio-anthropological perspective, and how the appeal to the metaphoric word in sacrament is ever necessary in keeping memorial of Christ's Pasch. But it would be wrong to think that Chauvet substitutes his explanation of rite's functioning for causality. He knows the difference between phenomenology and ontology. The phenomenology opens up the ontological question, but does not replace it. When we appreciate the nonadequation of symbol and rite to mystery, or even the split in consciousness which symbol induces, the relationship to mystery has to be explained by an ontology which avoids causality but keeps the reference to reality and the sense of gratuity alive.

Yves Labbé and Ghislain Lafont⁵ criticize Chauvet for his "closed world" of words and rites, but it may be responded that Chauvet espouses an ontological perspective which comes from the neoplatonically inspired meontology of Stanislas Breton.⁶ This eschews analogies in speaking of God while at the same time relating revelatory event and ecclesial life in all its forms to the One from whom/which all things proceed and to which/whom they return by an inner dynamism of attraction.

In his own work, Breton posited the need for writing in the very constitution of revelation.⁷ There is a double epistemological and ontological imperative to this. First, writing distances what is said from what is thought, but communication and transmission are impossible without it. Interpretation, however, must take this distancing into account. God's Word is necessarily made known in words that fall short

⁴ *Symbole et Sacrement* 313–17, 361–63.

⁵ Ghislain Lafont's own work, *Dieu, le temps et l'être* (Paris: Cerf, 1986), is of some interest to the issue of sacramental theology, since he has a section on the Eucharist. See the English translation, *God, Time and Being* (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede's, 1992) 134–72.

⁶ See Stanislas Breton's theological works, *Écriture et Révélation* (Paris: Desclée, 1978); and *Le Verbe et la Croix* (Paris: Desclée, 1981). See Chauvet, *Symbole et Sacrement* 74–78, 214–16.

⁷ Breton, *Écriture et Révélation*.

of the mystery and require interpretation, not merely speculative but practical. Second, when something in human history is established through an event, the event receives its power within human affairs through narrative, which may be primarily oral but which has to take on written form, where it is enriched by interplay with a variety of other genres. This necessarily means a distance between the event and later time, a distance at times experienced almost as an absence. The Christ event is present to the Church through narrative and its varied interpretation. Breton likes to speak of "trace" rather than representation⁸ and this carries over into Chauvet. God acts in human time, but what is left is the trace of the divine action. On the basis of the traces found in the Scriptures, the Church "writes itself" through its preaching, its theology, its ritual, and its ethics. This allows for the historicity of Christian expression and practice, for the presence of the Church as sacrament of Christ in divergent historical and cultural conditions, without having recourse to a theory of divine or instrumental causality. The cross has a critical role in the life of the Church, not only in its prophetic challenge but also in the way that it calls into question explanations offered in myth and in metaphysics.

This thinking seems to be behind Chauvet's stress on the role of the Scriptures in sacramental action and serves the praxis orientation of his theology. In line with the various ways in which the Church, inspired by the revealed word, "writes itself," without critical and prophetic witness Christian sacrament has no point of insertion into the life of the ecclesial community. In giving expression in sacrament to what is the trace of God's action in Christ, and the memory of the trace, the Church remains open to the critique of the cross.⁹

Sacrament and Aesthetics of Love: Jean-Luc Marion

By way of contrast with Chauvet, in Jean-Luc Marion¹⁰ the post-modern critique of the metaphysical tradition gives ground to a sac-

⁸ Breton, *Le Verbe et la Croix* 133-37.

⁹ The hermeneutical work of Paul Ricoeur could also find a place in this approach which does more justice to his project, since it would draw on the important difference between manifestation and proclamation, on his critique of the institutional, on his reading of the New Testament as a language of reversal, and on his own ontological project of the Other. This liberates his work from the hands of those who have not noted much beyond his dictum that "the symbol gives rise to thought," or his appeal in early work to the language studies of J. L. Austin.

¹⁰ Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, translated from the French by Thomas Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991).

ramental theology which relies heavily on the idea of openness to the iconic.

While his work is primarily philosophical,¹¹ Jean-Luc Marion essays a sacramental theology centered on the Eucharist that evades what he sees as the entrapment of the language of Being on the one hand and the resort to the retrieval of the subject on the other. Marion assents to the Heideggerian proposition that Western metaphysics has obscured the manifestation of Being, but believes that Heidegger keeps the question of God trapped in Being and ontotheology, by continuing to explore the issue of difference rather than acknowledging distance. Even in refusing to talk of God, Heidegger locks God into the confines of human predication. Inevitably, this gives rise to the deconstructionism of such as Jacques Derrida.

According to Marion, the language of perception (Husserl) only presents things as seen by the I, and the language of Being and beings (Heidegger) only presents the distance between Being and beings, and the call of Being to beings, the call to recognize the difference. This is not enough to allow God and creatures to enter into exchange. It is not that one cannot talk of God and creatures in terms of Being, but rather that this becomes a fixation (an idolatry) on the intermediate point where the difference occurs. The language of *causa sui* in regard to God, or of causality in regard to God's work, fixates the gaze outside of the mystery of revelation. It is more important to perceive negatively that God is nothing of anything that is created.

What then bridges the distance? Only the divine initiative, God's advent in self-giving, in agapic love, in the drama of Christ's self-giving, self-emptying, as the drama of his relation to the Father who pours himself out in love through the Son. This is what is expressed and realized in sacrament and Eucharist within the communion of the Church. The response of the "faithful" is confession of faith, praise, thanksgiving, and this has to be the basic language of theology. Hence Eucharist is the hermeneutic site for all interpretation of revelation.

Marion underlines the iconic of divine Love incarnate in Word, residing in the Church in the hermeneutic site of the Eucharist. God is revealed in *agapē*, in gift. God is named not from Being,¹² but from the cross. Even the word God has to be written with a Cross though the centre (Gød), since it is in the gift of love on the Cross that God comes

¹¹ "Of the Eucharistic Site of Theology" is presented in the main part of the book (139–58). The rest of his thoughts on sacrament belong "Hors Texte." (161–82).

¹² On this score, Marion criticizes the meaning given to the expression "I AM WHO I AM" in Thomas Aquinas (ibid. 77–83).

to us and in face of this no human predication can stand. It is in the distance between God and the world, on the space opened up through the very efforts at mythical and metaphysical expression, that the drama of agapic manifestation is played out.

There are three important words for Marion which have implications for sacramental theology: idol, icon and gift/giving (*donation*). First is the distinction between idol and icon. The understanding of idol begins in the realm of the visible, but for Marion its influence on Western thought is tied up with the idolatrous quality given to concept and metaphysical systems. The making of artefacts into idols comes from the fact that the gaze of the beholder stops at an expression of the divine instead of seeking to see beyond it. In metaphysics, concepts of God can exercise the same fascination.¹³ The idol is brilliant with what it shows of the divine, but it retains for itself the admiration of the beholder instead of deflecting attention to the origin. The naming of God, concepts about God, predications of God's action, all then become important. The result is that the divine is regionalized, tied to what is manifested or said of it. The icon on the contrary presents itself as the face that endows the visible with the inexhaustible invisibility of God. It does not offer itself to human conceptualization but invites the one who sees it to bypass it, to venerate what is revealed through it and towards which it invites the gaze and desire.¹⁴ Here we have the mysterious initiative of the divine, of which the icon par excellence is the Word incarnate in whom the gift of divine *agapē* is given to us. It is given however not to be spoken of, to be conceptualized, but to be received and worshipped. Response to the gift is not discourse but gratitude and jubilation. Gift can be spoken of in terms of appropriation of the gift, or in terms of distance of the giver, but both ways of speaking falsify the giving. It is simply to be praised for what it is, as manifested in the cross of the Word incarnate, divine *agapē*. God does not offer himself as an object to our vision, but as one who in silence looks upon us.¹⁵ Thus we do not come to know God through representations, but by consenting to abide beneath God's light. To know God, then, is to let oneself be known by God, to cease to appropriate the gift given, or the giving, or to distance it, but to receive it purely as gift.

In this approach Marion gives priority to the Johannine discourse on

¹³ Application of the distinction to visual representation, especially images and painting, is made in Marion's *La Croisée du visible* (Paris: La Différence, 1991).

¹⁴ Playing with words, Marion writes, "le visible fait le visible," the visible presents that toward which the beholder is invited to aim. In the same vein, he writes: "The icon makes visible only by giving rise to an infinite gaze" (*God without Being* 18).

¹⁵ See J.-L. Marion, "De la 'Mort de Dieu' aux Noms Divins: L'Itinéraire Théologique de la Métaphysique," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 41 (1985/1) 33.

Word and Love, and all biblical revelation is integrated into this iconicity. What he finds in John is the primacy not of the written word but of the Word made flesh. The written word has to deflect attention from itself to the Word made flesh, to the person of Christ, who intervenes in person in the life of the Church only at the Eucharistic moment. In face of the obscurity of language or concepts, we are not to appeal to the retrieval of the subject. For Marion this is a false turn in theology and in the interpretation of the Eucharist in particular, as though what it gave us were some kind of collective ecclesial consciousness, developed in response to the word of Christ and through a process of keeping memory.

There is a role for the sacrament of penance in bringing about iconic conversion, since it releases in us the power to speak a properly *theological* word,¹⁶ which is that of prayer, praise, silence, in face of the gift, of the divine regard upon us. The core of Marion's sacramental theology however is succinctly worked out in a couple of pages, where he writes of the Eucharist as the place for a hermeneutic.¹⁷ As he puts it, "the Christian assembly that celebrates the Eucharist unceasingly reproduces this hermeneutic site of theology."¹⁸ Following out the Emmaus narrative in Luke 24, he traces the enactment of the eucharistic celebration as it brings us into the presence of the Word and brings the gift of the Word in person to the Church. The law and the prophets, the *logia* of Christ himself, are read, and in being read are related to Christ's death, so that they are transgressed or passed through in order to bring the hearers to the manifestation of the Word in person that takes place in the event of the cross. The homily of the priest who does this hermeneutic for the community carries over into the eucharistic rite where the Word though visibly absent makes himself recognized in the breaking of the bread in the action and words of the priest whom the Word characterizes as his *person*. It is through the priest then who does the hermeneutic and then assumes the role of the person of the Word that the Word assimilates the community to himself, in which he acts through the priest. Because the priestly role is primarily that of the bishop, the teaching role is also primarily episcopal.¹⁹

This position is complemented in an essay on Christ's Ascension by

¹⁶ Marion calls the sacrament of penance "la condition de possibilité de la parole théologique quant à Dieu" (ibid.).

¹⁷ *God without Being* 151–52.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ In what Marion says of the bishop as the primary theologian in the Church (ibid. 156–58), one has to note his underlining of *theo* in *theology*. He is emphasizing the fact that because of the bishop's action in the Eucharist *in persona Christi*, he is the one to keep believers in touch with the Word and its manifestation, other theological tasks assumed by others being secondary to this.

Marion's discussion of blessing,²⁰ where he deciphers the role of the entire Church in expressing in itself the praise of God, in acknowledgment of the gift of love, and in living out as it were the fraction of the bread and wine in the self-gift of its members in imitation of Christ. On the other hand, since this spirituality is given its central, live-giving and iconic form in the sacraments, and most especially in the Eucharist, Marion's affirmation of the role of the bishop or priest as representative of the Word Incarnate in sacramental celebration is confirmed. The life of the Church must be anchored to the Eucharist, in which the Word incarnate "appearances" through the person of the bishop, speaking in his name and power within the community of faith. The Word of God present in the flesh and in the action of the Eucharist "crosses out" every idol, sensible or conceptual, by which humans presume to speak of God, and so theology has to be such as to let the Word speak in its fleshly and sacramental manifestation, rather than engaging in metaphysical or anthropological discourse.

In a lengthy disquisition on transubstantiation,²¹ offering a non-metaphysical interpretation, Marion focuses the transparency of the gifts of bread and wine in letting *agapē* show forth. In much that theology has said of transubstantiation, he finds the risk of idolatry, of attaching sight and attention to the symbol rather than that to which it is meant to draw attention. On the other hand, he rebukes those who through such terms as transignification bring attention to the community of the Church. For Marion, an authentic theology of real presence highlights three things: the gift of love, given within human time; the mystical reality of the Word's kenotic commitment, anticipating eschatological glory; the ecclesial body which is real only as a communion with Christ. Everything then centers on the bishop or presiding priest, who because he attains the Word in person in the celebration is the one to interpret the words of the Scriptures. In line with this, he explains the nature of memorial and its relation to the present. Since it is done in the name of a past event and in the eschatological impatience for the future of the return of Christ, memorial takes the present outside of the ordinary way of living time and makes it ecstatic, that is open to the gift of *agapē*. Memorial is not a simple matter of remembering something from the past. In virtue of this past event, whose trace is left in the words of Scripture, it gives the actual presence and gift here and now of the same Word who is the icon of the Father, now sacramentally active in the person of the priest who acts in the com-

²⁰ J.-L. Marion, "Le don d'une présence," in *Prolégomènes à la charité* (Paris: La Différence, 1986) 149–78.

²¹ *God without Being* 163–67.

munity. The word which this evokes is the word of praise, doxology, even silence, for this is the proper response to the gift.

What Marion has done in this sacramental theology is to eschew the turn to the subject, with postmodern skepticism about such a possibility. He has also espoused the Heideggerian critique of Western metaphysics, but made the Heideggerian critique itself subject to criticism for entrapping talk of God into the language of being. He then avoids a Derridean deconstruction of subjective interpretations by his use of the notion of icon. While he allows for a plurality of theologies having to do with human faith and action, he refers them all back to the icon of the Eucharist and the role of the bishop to do the hermeneutic, precisely because he presides in the person of the Word.

Conclusion

Marion and Chauvet share in common the rejection of metaphysical and causal explanations of sacrament, the emphasis on gift and divine self-giving, and the centrality of the cross as an act of divine self-effacement. They differ in the way that they understand the place of the sacrament in the Church. Marion is similar to von Balthasar in his idea of the form, comprising Scripture, ecclesial office and sacrament, that is in place from scriptural times, and that represents an aesthetic whole. Chauvet adopts the idea of revelation events as God's trace in human life. He then uses language and ritual studies to explain the historicity and historical becoming of the Church through sacramental celebration and attends more to the hidden quality of God's self-giving.²²

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4. FEMINIST THEOLOGY

The turn to the subject, liberation theology, and postmodernity, all occur in some way within the works of feminist theologians. In a recent chapter of a book, Susan Ross concludes by noting that in the area of sacramental theology feminist writing is concerned with the human in the mystery of the Incarnation, with the place of gender in the working of symbols, and with the connection between sacramental praxis and social justice.¹ While this is a good summary of interests, feminist

²² Chauvet, *Symbole et Sacrement* 222–23, actually refers to Marion's understanding of the icon, as he differentiates it from the idol, but in order to accentuate the hidden quality of divine gift and manifestation.

¹ Susan A. Ross, "God's Embodiment and Women: Sacraments," in *Freeing Theology*:

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theology is by no means to be taken as a methodologically uniform field. It is harder to keep the distinction between Catholic and Protestant, or between Christian and Jewish, between Judeo-Christian and such interests as the retrieval of Goddess religion, simply because there is so much shared among women, even in rite, beyond institutional divisions.²

In treating of sacrament, feminist theology, as a form of liberation theology, is concerned with fundamental views of reality and with the shaping of views and practices by patriarchy. To elaborate a radically new way of thinking about and celebrating sacraments, it addresses the critique of ideologies, the retrieval of what has been hidden or submerged, the critique of language and ritual behavior, and praxis. Ritualization, participation, and observation belong together, precisely because feminist theology is trying not simply to understand what sacrament is or how it works, but to discover what it might become when freed from ideologies, opened to new inspiration, encompassing new experiences, and nourished by new memories.

More than anywhere else, in feminist writing the boundary between liturgy and sacrament has all but disappeared. First, the concern is with ritual action and symbolic language that within communities revitalize the Christian tradition from a feminist perspective and draw upon it even while drawing on other religious traditions. Second, while writers often treat of the Church in a comprehensive way and look to a future of celebration within communities of equal discipleship, there is a very particular locus of discourse that is Women-Church or a community of women giving voice and role to women. Third, the methodological approach that is emerging is a very practical one, mixing act and reflective discourse in a distinctive way. The foundations of reflective discourse are posited in creative ritual act, through what one might call the process of ritualization par excellence.

Sacrament and Woman-Subject

The bulk of the writing is found among American scholars, but even there a difference exists between those who look primarily to American feminists as dialogue partners and those who look to French feminists. Quite interestingly, most of the specific French contribution to an understanding of sacrament does not come from theological writ-

The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993) 185–209.

² For a reasonably representative collection of essays, see *Women at Worship: Interpretations of North American Diversity*, ed. Marjorie Procter-Smith and Janet R. Walton (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/Knox, 1993).

ings but from feminists, such as Julia Kristeva,³ who are interested in religious expression as cultural heritage and look for ways to overcome its male domination.

Retrieval of Women-Subject

On the side of American feminist influence, the tactic is that of the retrieval of women-subject, with a critique of patriarchal paradigms in language, rite, and institution, and a theological reconstruction of liturgical history. In a recent essay, Mary Collins has outlined five principles of feminist liturgy.⁴ The foundational principle is “the ritualizing of relationships that emancipate and empower women.” This leads to the retrieval and the affirmation of what has been lost or forgotten. A second principle is that there are no elites to lead or order the liturgy, but the responsibility is community-centered and belongs within intentional groups. Third, the ritual action seeks “to transform patriarchal schemes of redeemed and redemptive relationships.” Fourth, rites develop a fresh repertory of symbolic speech and action. And fifth, feminist liturgy is more interested in producing liturgical events than in producing liturgical texts.⁵ This of course makes theological reflection more challenging. Since it has to consider ritualization as a process, there can be less dependency on standard texts than is the case even among male scholars who insist on the primacy of reflection on celebration or liturgical action in sacramental theology.

In previous work, Collins herself brings together the study of traditional liturgical language and a feminist reconstruction.⁶ There is a strong contribution to a renewed sacramental theology in the theological reconstruction of women’s roles in the early Church and of the emergence of patriarchy done by Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza,⁷ but this has to be carried over into history. In an essay on hermeneutics, Schüssler Fiorenza shows how celebration belongs to theological

³ The most prominent American discussion with French feminism is that of Rebecca S. Chopp, *The Power to Speak: Feminism, Language, God* (New York: Crossroad, 1991). See also *Transfigurations: Theology and the French Feminists*, ed. C. W. Maggie Kim et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

⁴ Mary Collins, “Principles of Feminist Liturgy,” in *Women at Worship* 9–26.

⁵ There is of course a host of texts in print, and a legion of mimeographed pages, but among feminists one could not find the idea of an *editio typica* to regulate all celebrations.

⁶ Mary Collins, “The Public Language of Ministry,” *Official Ministry in a New Age*, ed. James H. Provost, Permanent Seminar Papers 3 (Washington: Canon Law Society of America, 1981) 7–40; “Liturgical Language,” in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, ed. Peter E. Fink (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1990) 651–61.

⁷ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1984).

method by enumerating the four kinds of hermeneutics native to feminist theology: a hermeneutic of suspicion, a hermeneutic of proclamation, a hermeneutic of remembrance and historical reconstruction, and finally a hermeneutic of ritualization and celebration, which she also calls creative actualization.⁸ These four methods are intertwined, the last one allowing women a means of retrieving the power of their own creative imagination and its emancipatory power.⁹

Diagnostics of Ordination Practice

The question of ordination provides a diagnostic of what needs changing in sacramental practice and sacramental outlook. It is not a mere matter of women seeking ordination. It is rather that policy and thought on ordination represent an understanding of the sacramental and of grace which is discriminatory and male-dominated. As Susan Ross summarizes the matter, sacramental theology cannot assume the prevailing understandings of human experience or of the symbolic and ritual expressions of Christ and of the divine.¹⁰ Even while the distinctive nature of women's experience is affirmed, it also has to be seen as a locus of grace, power, and revelation, which requires not separation but diversity in sacramental ministry and representation. How the historical Jesus is remembered and how the presence and action of the risen Christ is represented is a central issue and means the interweaving of feminist Christology with sacramental theology.¹¹

Contributions from French Feminism

French feminists contribute in seeking the depth structures of traditional Catholic sacramental symbolism, which they see infected by patriarchy. They do not simply critique the assumptions of universality and patriarchy undergirding Western culture and religious traditions, but they are also skeptical of modernity's claim to a retrieval of the subject. They nonetheless search for new ways of reading texts and for ways of speaking that empower women and all who are the victims of patriarchy.

⁸ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Women-Church: The Hermeneutical Center of Feminist Biblical Interpretation," in her *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1984) 1-22.

⁹ For concrete suggestions for celebrating according to feminist models, see Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women-Church: Theology and Practice* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985).

¹⁰ Susan Ross, "God's Embodiment and Women."

¹¹ See Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Redeeming the Name of Christ," in *Freeing Theology* 115-38.

While the interest in religious discourse of French feminists is primarily that of students of culture, they offer specific critiques and suggestions for renewed speech within Christianity, which can offer pragmatic and creative dialogue to feminist theologians.¹² The one whose work seems most amenable to providing creative impulse to sacramental theology is Julia Kristeva.¹³

Kristeva relates to the postmodern critique of logocentrism and its supposed claims that language and concept can give adequate or direct representations of reality or of the self. From this point of view language and representation are always at odds with the signified. Taking this critique up in her own way, Kristeva allies herself with those who see no direct retrieval of the subject, no direct presence of the subject to itself. She makes a detour to the retrieval of the "subject in process" through the analysis of sign and symbol, as well as a reconstruction of the work of the imaginary in construing a world. This is especially important in retrieving the feminine imaginary from within patriarchal cultures and civilizations.

Kristeva specializes in psychology and language studies and their impact on the social contract.¹⁴ Elements of her work affect the understanding of Christian sacrament.¹⁵ Her critique of patriarchy and her search for new and empowering modes of women's speech are integral to this. Probing Jewish monotheism and then Christianity, she looks for the ways in which they have addressed the tendencies and tensions of human consciousness within religious paradigms. She is critical of Christian history for the ways in which the Church has subjected women, often in its ritual as well as in its spirituality. However, her analysis is such that it unearths the creative power of Christian symbolism, as well as its destructive aspects, and she draws on it for the possibilities of women-speech that belongs in public discourse. The challenge to sacramental practice and theology is whether there is that in its history and its symbolism, and especially in its origins, which can be retrieved despite the long history of patriarchy.

¹² On this dialogue, see *Transfigurations: Theology and the French Feminists*.

¹³ For English-language readers, there is a fine collection of her essays, *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University, 1986), which gives a list of works by Kristeva, including English translations where these exist (20–21). To this listing must be added the book, *Soleil noir: Dépression et mélancolie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987).

¹⁴ For what this means to social and culture development, see her essay "Women's Time," in *The Kristeva Reader* 187–213.

¹⁵ See Cleo McNelly Kearns, "Kristeva and Feminist Theology," in *Transfigurations* 49–80. Though French feminists are not mentioned, for similar interests, see Susan Ross, "God's Embodiment and Women."

Kristeva's distinction between *semiotic* and *symbolic*¹⁶ is helpful. The semiotic is expression that is corporeal in its roots, that is imaginatively associative and drive-patterned, and so less reflectively conscious. The symbolic is expression that is rational, socially negotiable, and much more overtly conscious, since it has to do with social relations and social power. Communities and societies constitute their social covenant by symbolic expression, which means that it leans heavily on shared significations but also is negotiable as power patterns change. For Kristeva, both types of expression are necessary even though in tension. Communities have to live the thin but dangerous dividing line between them, negotiate their interaction in the interests of freedom. To discover a power of expression within this tradition that contributes to the life of the subject in process, and especially woman-subject, requires what she calls *analytic listening* and *aesthetic practice*. The first allows the interpreter to attend to the intersection of the semiotic and the symbolic. The second allows for the retrieval of the power of the semiotic which has been suppressed when subordinated to the symbolic and social code.

Discourse and language have high significance for Kristeva, for only in access to language can the human person express and resolve drives and orientations. The problem with public discourse is that it may not allow all of society's members their expression, or that it may privilege male discourse, disempowering women in that which is most intimate to themselves. For Kristeva, the preaching and actions of Christ in his approach to persons expresses strong interiorization which goes beyond the legalism, ritual, and taboos which she finds in the prevailing Jewish religion of his time. While subsequent Christian symbolic discourse emphasizes the interiority of sin rather than external defilement, it has not retained creative and liberating power.

The depth structure of woman's religious expression is important to Kristeva. Feminine expression has not been muted, but it has either fostered subordination to the male, or has sought outlet that is marginal to the symbolic covenant, sometimes even in psychologically hurtful ways. In particular, Kristeva critiques the role of creedal expression in ritual and the role of the symbol of sacrifice.¹⁷ Both touch

¹⁶ This is helpfully explained in the two essays: "From Symbol to Sign," and "Semiotics: A Critical Science and/or a Critique of Science," in *The Kristeva Reader* 34–88. As McNelly Kearns comments, this distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic "can be very confusing to Anglo-Americans, for whom the term *symbol* carries a good deal of the connotations of materiality, associative meaning, and sensuality that Kristeva would place on the side of the semiotic" ("Kristeva and Feminist Theology" 65).

¹⁷ Much of the thought pertinent to sacrifice, reconciliation, and Eucharist is found in

on something necessary to the communal, but they have turned up in ways that are oppressive of women. Because of its formal nature, creed gives primacy to rational and public expression. If it dominates rite, it suppresses the imaginary and the creative.

Kristeva finds much in the language of sacrifice that is important, but she understands sacrifice primarily as something violent and suppressive, used as a ruse for forbidding certain pleasures and for keeping other ruptures and instincts to socially disruptive violence in trim. In Christianity, interpretation of Christ's death as sacrifice and its ongoing inclusion in the language of Eucharist and spirituality anticipate and prevent the violent action of sacrifice, serving thus as a taboo. In the process, however, it has sanctioned but suppressed the consciousness of a rupture between affirmation of God and human creativity, between spirit and body, and between the male and the female. Of women in particular, it has exacted an inner rupture with their own bodies,¹⁸ forbidden both the fruits of motherhood through union with the child whom in imitation of Mary they are compelled to "sacrifice," and the enjoyment, or *jouissance*, rooted in the body. In effect then, the eucharistic rite serves as a taboo which anticipates resort to social violence and checks resort to new sacrifices of persons, deemed necessary to the social order. But it has done this largely by subjugating women to a male-dominated symbolic, allowing her in the social process no place other than that of motherhood, and even then denying her the pleasure of motherhood through the demands of sacrifice. While Kristeva seems to acknowledge that this may be creative for mystically inclined women, it has been harmful to those whom she calls "ordinary women" because it allows them no social belonging except through their motherhood and then deprives them of enjoying even that.

A further area where depth structure can be examined is in the language of confession and forgiveness. There are deep ruptures in the human psyche that have to be both acknowledged and healed. They have to do with our very finitude and our transgression of relations, both personal and social. The sacrament of reconciliation¹⁹ offers a forum for creative healing and empowerment in relation to the divine which transcends gender and social discriminations. Kristeva summarizes the expression of this sacrament in the phrase: "I am mortal and

the collection of essays edited in English translation as *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University, 1982) 1–132.

¹⁸ For concrete examples, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley: University of California, 1987) 189–218.

¹⁹ Besides *Powers of Horror*, see *Soleil noir: Dépression et mélancolie* 194–226.

I speak." The first set of words allows the person to voice both the ruptured and the disruptive that is in the self. The second set of words, "I speak," come from the reconciled self who has been able to bring deep instincts and feelings to expression, in psychological terms bringing the attachment to the Mother into the relationship with the Father. She has a kinder appreciation of Augustine than is often common today, because at least he allowed that concupiscence and sin is in the body, and not simply in a willful transgression of law or offense against God. The problem with interiorization is that it can suppress the instinctive, rather than integrate it. At least Augustine allows us to name the instinctual, even if we have to regret it and renounce it. Discourse, however, if it integrates, can be freeing and reconciling. Addressed to the Other, it can receive back, as it were, an acceptance and love of the total self. If God is deemed to be offended when we give unbridled rein to instincts, it is freeing if words of pardon bless rather than suppress these instincts even while generating a creative power that is more spiritual but not less fleshly. From the experience of pardon then, the mortal can say "I speak."

While the relation to the divine is vital to the process of healing and reconciliation, sacramental theology could follow through with Kristeva's insights, showing that ecclesial reconciliation is necessary, reconciliation between persons who have offended and those who have given offense. The very need for ecclesial ritual recognition of fault, giving of pardon, and reconciliation, before patriarchy can be overcome, emerges. This gives a new historicity to sacraments, recognizing the particular role that they have to play at given moments in the forging of the nexus between the semiotic and the symbolic.

The Eucharist can function creatively as a rite of taboo, anticipative of sacrifice, if it is taken as such and does not promote psychotic suppression but rather moves to liberating discourse. It allows participants to find the reconciliation and creative juncture between "the body of the mother" and the "law of the father," to negotiate the line between the semiotic and the symbolic creatively. The symbolism of the body, rather than sacrifice, is at the heart of the Eucharist, which is a sacrament of eating and drinking the body and blood of the Lord, of taking Christ into our own bodies. Through the excessive emphasis on the symbolism of sacrifice, the ritual can downplay and even negate the bodily. If the deeply bodily is integrated into discourse, the sacrament elevates the body into the symbolic, all corporeality elevated, spiritualized, and sublimated, allowing place for *jouissance* and aesthetic expression. The formula over the bread, "This is my body," are the words of Christ who appeared in the flesh and continues to do so in

this sacramental way.²⁰ They are put out of focus if they are taken as masculine words, repeatable only by males, for they are now Christ's words over all that is earthly, cosmic, and human, over all flesh and the relations of flesh. They embrace both the drive-patterned and the socially-patterned, reconciling them within the one body and offering freedom and voice to all so consecrated.

English-language writers add nuances to Kristeva's contribution, whose psychologized historical inquiries might otherwise suggest the almost complete muting of an authentic woman's voice. For example, while some of the medieval eucharistic language may at times have provoked psychological tensions in women, in other cases it was given a more positive reading that allowed women creative affirmation, even if this was in some respects marginal to ecclesial structures.²¹ An English writer, Mary Grey,²² has further suggested that woman's self-expression in the Christian tradition is not as definitively or solely tied to the maternal, as Kristeva assumes.²³

On the subject of appropriate sacramental language, McNelly Kearns looks for a more positive use of creed within rite, provided it allows a more doxological expression of faith.²⁴ In looking at Christian culture, Kristeva has focused on rite and its inhibiting power. That is why she finds that in the contemporary world there is more creative power in artistic language and expression, and that this has to become the social or symbolic discourse of the age. In that, women are to have a primary role, since the social must integrate the feminine which has been suppressed. From an entirely different angle, Catholic theology has also focused too much on rite, even if doing so in its concern with efficacy. An understanding of sacrament today attempts a better integration of word and sacrament. Even now, perhaps not enough has been done to get beyond the signifying power of sacramental words to the doxological thrust of the prayer that completes the sacramental canon. Sacrament in its very inner constitution is not only proclamation and ritual ordering, but it is prayer and praise. In this concern with a discourse that goes beyond the ritual and the conceptual,

²⁰ "Qui Tollis Peccata Mundi . . .," in *Powers of Horror* 118–120.

²¹ For example, Gertrude of Helfta; see Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California, 1982) 170–209.

²² Mary Grey, " 'Yet Woman Will Be Saved Through Bearing Children' (1 Tim 2.16): Motherhood and the Possibility of a Contemporary Discourse for Women," *Bijdragen* 52 (1991) 58–69.

²³ Much more has to be said too about the meaning of sacrifice in Christian usage than Kristeva takes into account.

²⁴ "Kristeva and Feminist Theology."

Kristeva's critique and aspiration converges with the postmodernist concerns of Chauvet and Marion when they attend to the doxological aspect of sacrament.

Conclusion

In sum, feminist theology opens up the field of sacramental studies to the experience of women and in the process introduces new methodologies and new perspectives on symbol which change the way of reading sacramental tradition. It also gives new ways of interpreting practice and of incorporating insights from other sciences. With the distinctive contributions from American and from French feminism, there is room for continuing creative dialogue.

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5. AFRICAN AND ASIAN CONTRIBUTIONS

This part of the survey has to be brief, but omitting it would be to ignore an important part of the dialogue between local churches, North and South. It is an extensive, though largely unsystematized literature, not readily accessible in its totality on the American Continent. In the ten-year bibliography of African, Asian and Latin American works put out as *Theology in Context* between 1984 and 1994,¹ there are few entries in the index under the word *sacrament*. It is necessary instead to search under such rubrics as *rite*, *symbol*, *culture*, *inculturation*, *religion*, *popular religiosity*, to find an emerging sacramental theology which relates very specifically to cultures and their religious sense, as well as to justice and the Church's option for the poor.

The discussion on both continents embodies fresh perspectives on sacramentality, with much attention given to symbols, their cosmic, biotic, and oneiric roots, as well as to their social, familial, and cultural roles.² The approach is generally practical. Rites are not attributed a

¹ *Theology in Context: Information on Theological Contributions from Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Latin America*, 11 vols. (Aachen: Institute of Missiology, Missio, 1984-94). Some of the periodicals that touch on this field are: *Au Coeur de l'Afrique*, *Bulletin of African Theology*, *Cahiers de Religions Africaines*, *African Christian Studies*, *East Asian Pastoral Review*, *Revue de Théologie Africaine*, *Télema*, *Word and Worship*. For a good overview of African approaches, see *Médiations Africaines du Sacré: Actes du Troisième Colloque International du Kinshasa 1986* (Kinshasa: Facultés de Théologie Catholique, 1987). For examples of two Asian perspectives, see *East Asian Pastoral Review* 19 (1982/3), issue entitled "Sacraments and Culture," and *Jeevadhara* 18 (July 1988), issue entitled "Liturgy of the Church in the Indian Context."

² See François Kabasele Lumbala, "Symboles africains et célébration liturgique," *Théologie Africaine: Bilan et Perspectives: Actes de la dix-septième semaine théologique de Kinshasa 1989* (Kinshasa: Facultés Catholiques, 1989) 109-128; Eugene E. Uzukwu, *Liturgy: Truly Christian, Truly African*, Spearhead 74 (Eldoret: Gaba, 1982). For a

Kristeva's critique and aspiration converges with the postmodernist concerns of Chauvet and Marion when they attend to the doxological aspect of sacrament.

Conclusion

In sum, feminist theology opens up the field of sacramental studies to the experience of women and in the process introduces new methodologies and new perspectives on symbol which change the way of reading sacramental tradition. It also gives new ways of interpreting practice and of incorporating insights from other sciences. With the distinctive contributions from American and from French feminism, there is room for continuing creative dialogue.

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5. AFRICAN AND ASIAN CONTRIBUTIONS

This part of the survey has to be brief, but omitting it would be to ignore an important part of the dialogue between local churches, North and South. It is an extensive, though largely unsystematized literature, not readily accessible in its totality on the American Continent. In the ten-year bibliography of African, Asian and Latin American works put out as *Theology in Context* between 1984 and 1994,¹ there are few entries in the index under the word *sacrament*. It is necessary instead to search under such rubrics as *rite*, *symbol*, *culture*, *inculturation*, *religion*, *popular religiosity*, to find an emerging sacramental theology which relates very specifically to cultures and their religious sense, as well as to justice and the Church's option for the poor.

The discussion on both continents embodies fresh perspectives on sacramentality, with much attention given to symbols, their cosmic, biotic, and oneiric roots, as well as to their social, familial, and cultural roles.² The approach is generally practical. Rites are not attributed a

¹ *Theology in Context: Information on Theological Contributions from Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Latin America*, 11 vols. (Aachen: Institute of Missiology, Missio, 1984-94). Some of the periodicals that touch on this field are: *Au Coeur de l'Afrique*, *Bulletin of African Theology*, *Cahiers de Religions Africaines*, *African Christian Studies*, *East Asian Pastoral Review*, *Revue de Théologie Africaine*, *Télema*, *Word and Worship*. For a good overview of African approaches, see *Médiations Africaines du Sacré: Actes du Troisième Colloque International du Kinshasa 1986* (Kinshasa: Facultés de Théologie Catholique, 1987). For examples of two Asian perspectives, see *East Asian Pastoral Review* 19 (1982/3), issue entitled "Sacraments and Culture," and *Jeevadhara* 18 (July 1988), issue entitled "Liturgy of the Church in the Indian Context."

² See François Kabasele Lumbala, "Symboles africains et célébration liturgique," *Théologie Africaine: Bilan et Perspectives: Actes de la dix-septième semaine théologique de Kinshasa 1989* (Kinshasa: Facultés Catholiques, 1989) 109-128; Eugene E. Uzukwu, *Liturgy: Truly Christian, Truly African*, Spearhead 74 (Eldoret: Gaba, 1982). For a

general efficacy, but their power is tested in specific situations, where the purpose is the nurturing of life, socialization into community, communion with the dead or with spirits, reconciliation or healing. Such an approach has affinities with feminist theology, itself well represented among Africans and Asians,³ since it means a process of practical ritualization as a ground for theological reflection when this plays the mediating role between gospel and culture, or Christian sacrament and culture.

In short, more fundamental than a sacramental system of seven sacraments in the emerging inculturation of Christian worship is a basic sacramentality that relates to the religious sense inherent in cultures, and expresses humanity's relation to earth and cosmos, as well as to ancestors and the living dead. It integrates the rituals of life-rhythms and body-rhythms, and attends to the role of various mediators in communities of peoples. With this view of sacramentality, the question is not one of adapting traditional sacramental rites to cultures, nor of finding African and Asian ways of expressing given sacramental meanings. The history of sacrament has to live in dialectic with a symbolic and ritual expression which takes shape in cultures, rooted in an ancient religious sense, within communities that profess faith in Jesus Christ and the Church of his disciples. Since sacraments were brought to African and Asian peoples in the forms of Western culture and with little regard for the peoples' own heritage, sacramental theology has to include a critique of past practice and theology, even while attempting to retrieve the power of its core symbols.⁴ Essential to this critique is the challenge to complicity between sacramental rite and social power, both ecclesial and civic.

Christian presence and action in a society in need of change, especially in the interests of the poor, emerges as a sacramental question.

methodological approach to African theology that affects the theology of sacrament and worship, see Justin S. Ukpong, "Towards a Renewed Approach to Inculturation Theology," *Journal of Inculturation Theology* 1 (1994/1) 8–24. For the pertinence of ancestor veneration to sacrament and worship, see Charles Nyamiti, "African Ancestral Veneration and its Relevance to the Christian Churches," *African Christian Studies* 9 (1993/3) 14–37.

³ In this field, see for example *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa*, ed. Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi R. A. Kanyoro (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1993). For a review of Asian women's sensitivity to poetics and celebration, see Chung Hyun Kyung, "Who is Jesus for Asian Women?" in *Asian Faces of Jesus*, edited by R. S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1993) 223–46.

⁴ Looking at the ritual of the Independent Churches in Africa, or sects and cults on both continents, is found to be a rewarding study, since these bodies have done more to wed traditional ritual with Christian gospel than mainstream churches, and since they express the actual messianic hopes of their members.

Prophetic in its action, the Church has to be prophetic in its ritual. As Jean-Marc Ela⁵ states it, prophetic memory localizes grace under the shadow of the cross, by relating the commemoration and witness of victims to Christ's memory. In being taken into Christian sacrament, African symbolism is not to be retrieved in a romantic way, but in its openness to the concrete realities of world and people. Rites function to make the Church a true sign of hope for those who risk living in despair. Ela finds that Christian churches often failed in this regard. Their seeming powerlessness to reveal and express the liberating power of the gospel has provoked the appearance of black messianisms, signs of a certain hope in the midst of misery, sickness, and oppression. The challenge to the Church is to relate sacramental rites to the hopes and struggles of human liberation, in which it is itself truly engaged. Liturgy can be the language of a prophetic church when it keeps memory in Christ of the forgotten, the oppressed, and the victims of history.

The cry for justice in this kind of sacramental theology has a focal point in discussion of the eucharistic elements. Not only does retention of Mediterranean substances prevent a bodying of Christ in local cultures, but it subjects the sacrament to the laws of global market and foreign capital. Thus Sidbe Semporé⁶ in face of famine on the African continent finds in this a sign of the unjust distribution of goods which contradicts the very essence of eucharistic memorial, making it an affront to those who starve or who subsist on minimal nourishment.

Attempting to summarize a theological method of sacramental reflection that undergirds ritual change in these young churches, one could say that what is emerging is a method of contextualization. Through this method, it is possible to discover the mediation of rite in transforming or stabilizing the human, as well as ways of integrating cultural ritual forms into the proclamation and memory of Christ, in dialectic with sacramental history. It also makes it possible to discern and give focus to sacrament's liberating power. It is in brief a sacramental theology which is a reflection on the practical, contextual, and empirical role of rites and language in mediating Christ's grace and presence, and it is rooted in an understanding of the place of rite and symbol in traditional religions and cultures of the African and Asian continents.

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⁵ Jean-Marc Ela, *African Cry*, trans. from the French (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1988).

⁶ Sidbe Semporé, "The Famine in Africa," trans. from the French, *Concilium* (1993/3); *The Spectre of Mass Death*, ed. David Power and Kabasele Lumbala (London: SCM; and Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1993) 9–12. For an Asian perspective on Eucharist and justice, see Tissa Balasuriya, *Eucharist and Human Liberation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1977).

CONCLUSION

From this survey of literature on sacraments, it is clear that they are treated currently in a much wider liturgical, ecclesial, and theological context than was formerly the case. Even those who still adopt a neo-classical notion of sacrament, work out the categories of explanation in a new perspective and with more attention to the ecclesial and anthropological dimensions of word, sign, and celebration. The literature shows that sacramental theology can no longer be done without an interdisciplinary approach. Though this is used in a variety of ways, sacramental understanding and practice require insights provided by other sciences into rite and symbol, language forms and expressions, human communications, and liberative praxis.

Rather than start with a set notion of sacrament, many begin with the Church's sacramental practice and look for ways of interpreting this, even critically. In this latter vein, some examine particularly the laws of celebration, with emphasis on the axiom *lex orandi lex credendi*, while others look at the relation of sacrament to a larger ecclesial praxis, and indeed to issues of a full human liberation and empowerment. For liberation theology, feminist theology, and African and Asian contributions, this involves a critique of sacramental practice and sacramental thought, done from different angles, in view of their renewal. These theological approaches in order to understand sacramentality also look outside formal sacramental rites to other celebrations and ritual experience, whether these be found in women-church, popular religiosity or cultural religious rites.

Whether because of the critique of traditional approaches and categories, or because of attention to practice, there is considerable reconsideration of the ways in which sacraments need to be explained. Whatever the considerable differences in sacramental theologies that result, it is with a deep sense of faith, faith that Christ and the Spirit are active in the community of disciples in truly human forms, that the task of theological reflection has been variously undertaken.

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